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# THE LADY OF BLEEDING HEART YARD





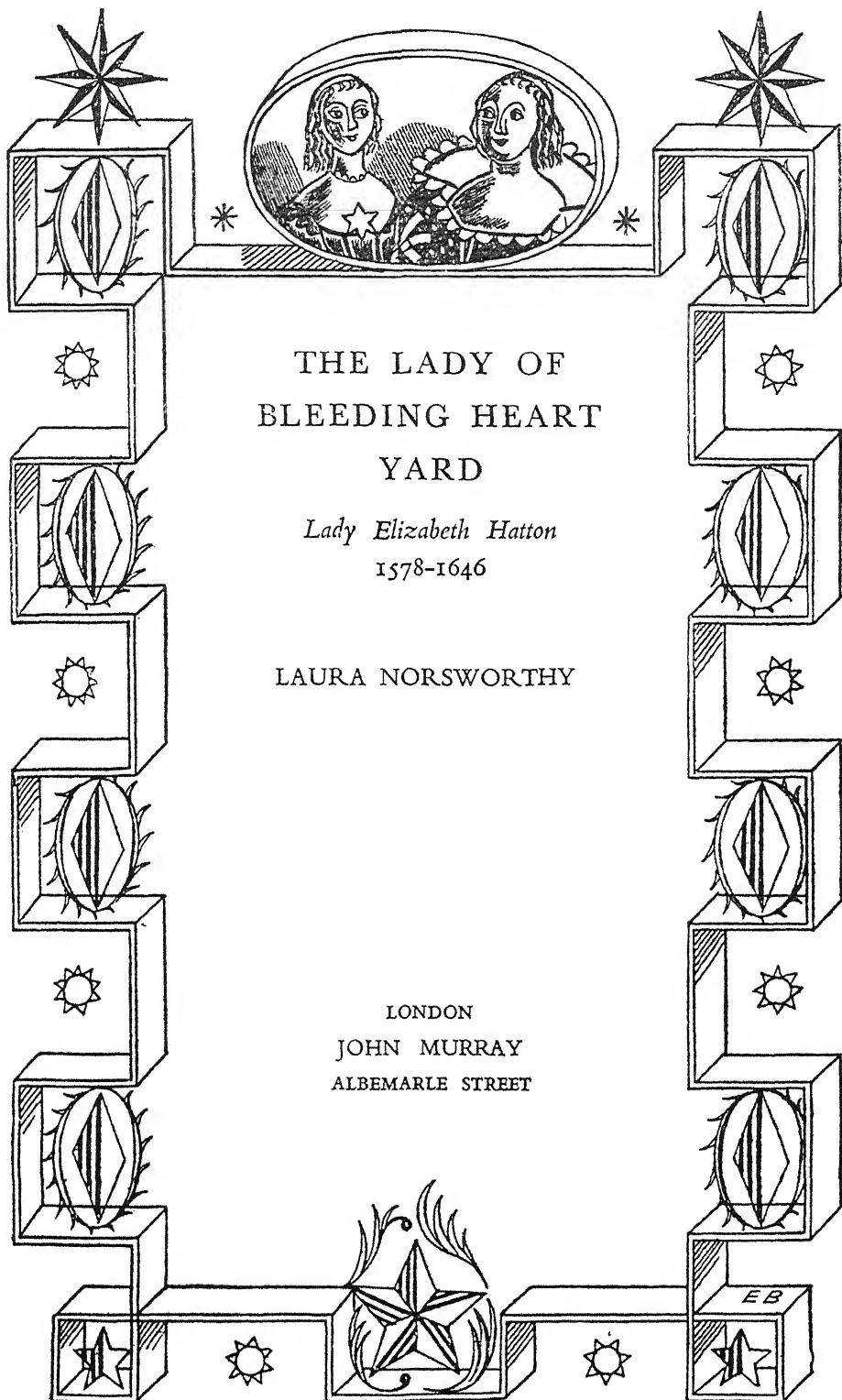


THE LADY OF  
BLEEDING HEART  
YARD

*Lady Elizabeth Hatton*  
1578-1646

LAURA NORSWORTHY

LONDON  
JOHN MURRAY  
ALBEMARLE STREET



*First Edition* . . . 1935

●

To  
*My Children*  
*Jacintha*  
*Prosper*  
*and*  
*Guinever*  
*Buddicom*



# CONTENTS

CHAPTER		PAGE
I.	LEGEND AND A LADY . . . . .	I
	Her first marriage—Corfe Castle—Hatton House in Holborn.	
II.	SUITORS . . . . .	8
	Francis Bacon proposes—Weds the Attorney-General—The Queen forbids secrecy—Elizabeth and Frances Coke.	
III.	DAYS AT COURT AND SIR EDWARD COKE . . . . .	16
	Christmas in 1603—King James I—Sir Walter Raleigh—Coke shows his claws—Sir Edward Coke disgraced.	
IV.	PROPOSALS OF MARRIAGE . . . . .	30
	A dispute at council table—Lady Hatton upholds Coke—A marriage settlement—Sir John Villiers—Sir Edward Coke plans—Lady Hatton counter-plans.	
V.	THE COUNCIL TEMPORIZES . . . . .	44
	Frances kidnapped—3 score Men and Pistolls—Lady Hatton before the Star Chamber.	
VI.	THE KING INTERVENES . . . . .	51
	The talk of the town—The courtship continues—Lady Hatton overruled.	
VII.	A WEDDING AT HAMPTON COURT . . . . .	61
	A whipping at the bedpost—The wedding day—The King has a merry night—Lady Hatton still captive—Lady Hatton celebrates her release.	

# Contents

CHAPTER	PAGE
VIII. LADY HATTON RESUMES CONTROL . . . . .	73
Lady Hatton and Sir Dudley Carleton—The Queen dies—The King to the rescue—"Lugging the sow by the ear"—Lady Hatton "at home"—The Banbury case—A statute against sorcery—The Overbury murder trials.	
IX. SIR EDWARD COKE IN PARLIAMENT . . . . .	95
The Spanish Ambassador—Coke in the Tower.	
X. TROUBLES OF THE VISCOUNT PURBECK . . . . .	105
Lady Catherine Manners—The King as peace-maker—Lady Hatton and the gypsy—A change of faith.	
XI. FRANCES FACES DEFEAT . . . . .	117
A crisis—Lady Hatton guards Frances—Frances writes to the Duke—The Prince goes to Spain—Purbeck's malady returns—Purbeck at Hampton Court—The law of "The Four Seas"—Dr. Lambe and his mysteries.	
XII. A NEW ORDEAL FOR FRANCES . . . . .	139
Frances as Mistress Wright—Lady Hatton visits lawyers—Frances and Howard accused.	
XIII. LETTERS AND A LAWSUIT. . . . .	146
A question of bail—The trial begins—Frances is ill of smallpox—Mr. Innocent Lanier—His Grace urges his case—Illness of King James I.	
XIV. THE PLAGUE OF 1625 . . . . .	163
Death of King James I—The Fleet prison—Threat to kill or poyson—An ale-house in the Strand—Auguries and omens—A water pageant—The Plague.	
XV. A FINE, A PENANCE AND A FLIGHT . . . . .	182
A new trial—A day of judgment—Hide and seek—A page-boy in lady's dress—Clun and Hopesay.	
XVI. SOME ENEMIES MAKE THEIR EXIT . . . . .	196
Lady Hatton offers aid—Coke becomes High Sheriff—The Petition of Right—A ghost story—Death of the Duke—The saltpetremen—Purbeck again afflicted.	

# Contents

CHAPTER	PAGE
XVII. DEATH OF SIR EDWARD COKE . . . . .	211
Coke and the doctors—Changes at Stoke Poges—A new petition—Frances under arrest.	
XVIII. FRANCES FORMS NEW ALLIES . . . . .	220
Archbishop Laud in pursuit—Frances in the Gatehouse—Frances flies to France—Sir Kenelm Digby—A writ from King Charles—Richelieu to the rescue—Frances leaves the nunnery.	
XIX. THE CIVIL WAR BEGINS . . . . .	237
The King's care of Purbeck—Lady Hatton in the Fleet—The Church of St. Giles at Stoke Poges—The Court at Oxford.	
XX. LADY HATTON . . . . .	249
London fortified—Roundheads at Ely House—Frances ill at Oxford—Burial of Frances—Will of Lady Hatton—Lady Hatton's charities—Her death—The lying in state.	
ENVOY . . . . .	265
An Elizabethan love letter—A storm and an explosion.	
APPENDIX I. . . . .	273
Charles II to Christopher Hatton.	
APPENDIX II. . . . .	275
"The proceedings betweene the Lady Eliza: Hatton and Sir Edw: Coke Attorney Generall to Queene Eliza:"	
APPENDIX III. . . . .	279
Lady Purbeck's petition.	
REFERENCES . . . . .	283
INDEX . . . . .	285





## ILLUSTRATIONS

	FACING PAGE
HOLBORN IN 1593 . . . . .	I
From Norden's Map of London	
SIR EDWARD COKE . . . . .	10
STOKE MANOR . . . . .	16
From R. Bentley's Illustrations to Gray's Poems, 1753	
From a print supplied by the British Museum	
THE VILLIERS FAMILY. . . . .	38
KING JAMES I . . . . .	66
By Vansomer 1620 (?)	
QUEEN ANNE OF DENMARK . . . . .	76
DR. FORMAN . . . . .	92
Astrologer	
PRINCE CHARLES NEARING PORTSMOUTH ON HIS RETURN FROM SPAIN ON OCTOBER 5TH, 1623 . . . . .	134
By Vroom	
LADY ELIZABETH HATTON'S LETTER TO SECRETARY WINDEBANK. CIRCA 1633 . . . . .	198
THE MOB PELTING DR. LAMBE ON JUNE 13TH, 1628 . . . . .	204
From a contemporary pamphlet	

## *Illustrations*

	FACING PAGE
CORFE CASTLE IN 1643 . . . . .	250

TITLE PAGE

Designed by Edward Bawden

## FOREWORD

WHAT FOLLOWS HAS BEEN WRITTEN BECAUSE OF A WISH TO do justice to a lady long dead and posthumously maligned. If, thereby, the shadow is lifted that has lain so long on her memory, time and research spent on the task will be well repaid.

L. L. N.



I ACKNOWLEDGE WITH GRATITUDE THE COURTESY AND HELP I have received in tracing Lady Elizabeth Hatton's life ; and especially I thank the Keeper and Assistant Keepers of the Manuscripts at the British Museum, the Keeper of the Western Manuscripts at the Bodleian Library, and the Librarian and his assistants at the Reading Central Public Library, Reference Department.

And also Mr. Longley of the Manuscript Department, British Museum ; Mr. Liddell of the Western Manuscript Department, Bodleian Library ; Mr. R. H. Hill, Secretary of the Bodleian Library ; Mr. Wilson, Managing Director of Messrs. John & Edward Bumpus, Oxford Street, London ; Miss Auden, of the Shropshire Archaeological Society ; Mr. H. Jones, Treasurer and Director of the Clun Museum ; Mr. C. T. Flower, Secretary to the Public Record Office ; Mr. R. H. Gibbon, Librarian to the Dean and Chapter of Ely ; Mr. F. Lavender, Town Clerk of Bishop's Castle, Shropshire ; Mr. E. W. Green, City Librarian of the St. Albans Public Library ; Mr. L. G. Southall, of the Ware Urban District Council ; the Rev. D. Bedford, Rector of St. Andrew's Church, Holborn ; the Rev. F. W. Jorkin, Vicar of St. Mary's Church, Oxford ; the Rev. A. C. Buss, Rector of Hopesay, Shropshire ; and others, without whose kindness I might not have been able to finish my task.

L. L. N.



## PREFACE

IT IS NOT EASY TO PRESENT THE LADY ELIZABETH HATTON AND her daughter, Frances, Viscountess Purbeck, so as to do justice to their memory—that justice which posterity has hitherto denied them. They left no diaries, no long consecutive correspondence, no personal reminiscences. They left their lives in fragments behind them—a letter here—a petition there—gossip now and then in the correspondence of contemporaries—a few notes in the minutes of the Prerogative Court of High Commission—sundry memoranda among the State Papers, Foreign and Domestic, of the reigns of James I and Charles I, and brief references in the biographies of Sir Edward Coke. To collect these small pieces of a puzzle and so reconstruct them as to make up a living picture requires an abler biographer than I can claim to be, and I crave indulgence for the numerous shortcomings that will be found in the book.

By kind permission of the Trustees of the British Museum, the Keeper of the Western Manuscripts, Bodleian Library, and of the Records, Public Record Office, I have been able to obtain photographs of many of the original documents, petitions, letters, and other papers, including Lady Elizabeth Hatton's will, and have been able to follow clues leading to a solution of problems which otherwise would have remained unsolved. What has increased the difficulty has been the subsequent Purbeck Peerage Claim, which followed the events recorded here, persisted through a whole century, and accumulated legal documents, some of which—as the events to which they referred became more and more remote—



## *Preface*

gradually began to acquire inaccuracies on one side or the other. Taken alone these legal documents would put a false construction on some of the facts connected with Frances, Viscountess Purbeck. I have endeavoured to seek the truth so far as it has been possible to do so after three hundred years.

But seeking the truth has been a long labour. It has been necessary to examine conflicting statements and to follow them to their original sources whenever possible, and this has elicited a vast amount of contemporary information which has been most illuminating. It has shown, among other things, that Lady Elizabeth Hatton had full measure of sympathy while she lived, for her inability to live with her second husband, Sir Edward Coke, though posterity, seeing through the eyes of Sir Edward Coke's biographers, and taking too seriously Richard Barham's skit on Sir Christopher Hatton in the *Ingoldsby Legends*, has chosen to blame her. Sir Edward Coke was a fine patriot, a magnificent lawyer, and a colossal figurehead. Posterity has remembered these things because they are still before us, but has forgotten the defects in his character, which died with him. To us these defects do not matter. They mattered very much to his wife and daughter, and provide the key to his relationship with the former, and the solution to the problem of the latter.

Considerable effort has been made to find portraits of the Lady Elizabeth Hatton, Frances, Viscountess Purbeck, and of Sir Robert Howard, and also an engraving or drawing of Hatton House and Bleeding Heart Yard for insertion in the book. Unfortunately these have not materialized. My thanks are due to the Director of the National Portrait Gallery, Mr. M. R. Holmes of the London Museum, and to Mr. C. W. F. Gosse of the Bishopsgate Institute in this connection.

## *Preface*

My thanks are especially due to John Murray for the kindly way in which they have made suggestions about the book, and for their appreciation of what it has meant to try to bring Lady Elizabeth Hatton and her daughter from the retirement which was denied them when they lived, but to which death has relegated them for so long since.

LAURA LUCIE NORSWORTHY.



HOLBORN IN 1593, FROM NORDEN'S MAP OF LONDON.

By kind permission of The Trustees of The British Museum

H marks presumed position of Hatton House.

- |   |                 |   |                   |    |              |
|---|-----------------|---|-------------------|----|--------------|
| l | Chauncery Lane  | p | St. Andrewes      | 9  | Marke Lane   |
| m | Temple Barr     | k | Holbourne Conduit | 13 | Fleetstreete |
| n | Holbourne       | 8 | Fancshurche       | 14 | Fetter Lane  |
| o | Grayes Inn Lane |   |                   | 15 | St. Dunshous |

## LEGEND AND A LADY

SHE WAS THE LADY ELIZABETH HATTON, AND HER FAME—LIKE herself—was nothing if not original.

There is a legend about her. Richard Barham has told it at some length in the *Ingoldsby Legends*. But that is not to say he expected the story to be believed, inasmuch as there is more than a hint in it that she was in league with the Devil, who gave her all she wanted on the usual terms and, when the time came for the reckoning, carried her away in the middle of a storm of thunder and lightning from a party at Hatton House, her town home in Holborn. And all that was found of her afterwards was her bleeding heart in the pump yard outside. People in her day saw nothing amiss with the story, so they called the place Bleeding Heart Yard. And though Hatton House has long since given way to other buildings hard by Ely Place and the Holborn Viaduct, Bleeding Heart Yard is where it has always been. There is even a theory that a tavern of the name once stood there, but proofs of this are not forthcoming, and if they were they would spoil the legend. One thing is certain, Bleeding Heart Yard is not what it was in Lady Elizabeth Hatton's day, but her ghost, they say, still hovers about the site of it—a white ghost, pumping the imaginary handle of an imaginary pump which never draws a drop even of ghostly water.

Perhaps what gave rise to the legend was the fact that Hatton House had once formed part of an episcopal palace and had been filched from the Bishops of Ely, and when

## *The Lady of Bleeding Heart Yard*

Lady Elizabeth Hatton came into possession she routed no less than four of the Bishops, one after the other, because they tried to dislodge her—which is enough to account for anything. Moreover, two of the Ladies Hatton—Cecilia and another Elizabeth—met their end by being blown up in the explosion of a powder magazine during a storm of thunder and lightning. This happened at Castle Cornet in Guernsey, and not at Hatton House in Holborn, though as they followed the Lady Elizabeth Hatton in the ownership of the place it may be considered near enough. Further foundation for legend adds that she was endowed with every worldly advantage which the Devil could possibly be expected to bestow—that she consulted wizards and fortune-tellers about her private affairs—that she was of a nature so tempestuous that her second husband, Sir Edward Coke, was excluded from her house when she did not want him and might only enter by the back door when she did—that her parties at Hatton House were among the most famous in the kingdom—and that she died in the midst of the festivities of the New Year, in 1646.

She provided the Court and the country with food for gossip for many a year, but Richard Barham, for no better reason, it would seem, than to play havoc with history, has confused her with Alice Fanshawe, and married her to Sir Christopher Hatton, Queen Elizabeth's elegant Lord Chancellor, juggling a whole series of Ladies Hatton to make a legend of one.

The elegant Lord Chancellor never married—for the sake of the Queen they said—and though there was undoubtedly an Alice Fanshawe, she was a child when he died. There was nothing between them. When she grew up she became the wife of his godson, cousin and namesake—another Sir Christopher Hatton—but they never owned Hatton House in Holborn; the Lady Elizabeth Hatton was in possession at

## *Her first marriage*

the time and for long after they were dead. She, and no other, was the Lady of Bleeding Heart Yard. She was the fourth daughter of Lord Burghley, Earl of Exeter, and granddaughter of Queen Elizabeth's great Lord Treasurer, and her name before she married was the Lady Elizabeth Cecil. She became the wife of Sir William Newport, nephew by the sister of the Lord Chancellor, and her husband took the name of Hatton when his uncle died. It was in Queen Elizabeth's Court that she began her career. Her path through life lay always among Courts, in the ways of which she was well versed, for she lived in three reigns and held her own in all of them.

She was rich and she was beautiful. She had health and fame and a lively wit. She had no lack of spirit. Had her disposition matched the rest she might have attained perfection. But *that* the Lady Elizabeth Cecil never saw her way to do. She was self-willed. She was not always quite truthful. And she had a high temper.

When she was young she had to listen to reason, for her family was a large one and she near the tail of it, but as she grew older she rebelled and, determined to do as she chose, went to strange lengths to accomplish her object. In the matter of marriage, however, she had to do as her family thought best, and perhaps it was because of this that she developed her curious wayward "complex." For her family gave her to two men much older than herself in succession, and in the second venture life's harmony was broken by discordant notes and whole passages of unmelodious sound, and in her half-understood resentment at being forced to yield she, knowing no better, sought to drown the noise in other sound.

Her first marriage was happy, and had her husband lived her story might have given little to relate. Forty-eight years

## *The Lady of Bleeding Heart Yard*

after he died she wrote in her will that she had "abounded with temporal felicity while she was the happy wife of her first most faithful and dear deceased husband with whose breath all her transitory happiness expired." There is no reason to doubt it. She was friendly with his relations and devoted to his memory as long as she lived. When she married him he was a widower with one infant daughter, Frances Hatton. He inherited part of the estates of the great Lord Chancellor—the other part went to that other Sir Christopher Hatton, who married some eleven years later Miss Alice Fanshawe. Sir William (Newport) Hatton died without sons and his widow inherited most of his share.

She came in for the whole of the Isle of Purbeck with Corfe Castle, and for Hatton House in Holborn. But out of the rents of the former there was a debt owing to the Queen of a good round sum of £42,000 for which the late Lord Chancellor had given a bond to the Crown to pay off by instalments.

Sir William Hatton was in evidence before the death of his uncle, and at the coming of the Spanish Armada—sailing off with his neighbours in ships of their own hiring, to join the fleet that was to chase away the Spaniards from the English coast.

He was in evidence again after his uncle died, enjoying with his young wife his heritage of Corfe Castle and of Hatton House in Holborn. And then he passes from the page and from the Lady Elizabeth Hatton's story, for he died in 1597, leaving her a very rich widow indeed. She was scarcely out of her teens, and only older by months when she married again. Her family might have given her a few years in which to think things over and make her own choice of a second spouse, but there was no lack of suitors, and it was thought best for her to marry someone suitable, at once, for the sake of security.

She was, indeed, blessed with everything that could make

## *Corfe Castle*

her desirable in person, place and fortune. As to the last, although Corfe Castle and Hatton House are far from being what they were—indeed Corfe Castle is a ruin and Hatton House no longer exists—their sites have only to be visited to see the possibilities they held in those days as part of the dowry of a young and beautiful lady.

Corfe Castle frowns from the summit of a barren hill—grim—gaunt—and grey—a monument to Time, determined to mark so long as one stone will stand upon another the hideous vandalism of the Commonwealth. It shows clearly, nevertheless, what a magnificent stronghold it was before the coming of the Parliament men.

It had wards and towers, bulwarks and ditches. It was inaccessible except from one point which was guarded by a barbican and a bridge over a moat. There was a gigantic stairway from the second ward to the third, and at the stair-head a great, wide platform fitted with cannon. There were dungeons and strong rooms, a chapel and a keep. In places the walls were twelve feet thick. The castle was sumptuously furnished—lacking nothing—and contained the best of everything an Elizabethan courtier could think of for the reception of the gracious Queen to whose magnanimity he owed his elevation. For Corfe Castle had belonged to the Crown until Queen Elizabeth had relieved herself of the expense of its upkeep by presenting it to Sir Christopher Hatton. And, just as it was when he brought it to perfection, so it was still when the Lady Elizabeth Hatton became its *châtelaine*. And so, too, was Hatton House in Holborn. The girl widow of the Lord Chancellor's nephew gathered the fruits of the courtier's labour, enjoyed the rewards of his loyalty, and spent a fortune right royally in the places that had been his.

At that period there was no Bishop of Ely. The see had been vacant since 1581. There had been trouble in the time



## *The Lady of Bleeding Heart Yard*

of the last Bishop when Sir Christopher Hatton had cast a covetous eye on the amenities of Holborn—then a fashionable suburb of London—and Bishop Cox, who held the see, had made some bother about giving up his garden, his orchard, fourteen acres of his land, and a portion of his palace to please the Lord Chancellor. Eventually a lease had been granted, the rental being a red rose, ten loads of hay and £10 per annum, the Bishop reserving to himself and to all future Bishops of Ely the right of ingress and egress through the gatehouse—permission to perambulate the garden—and to gather twenty bushels of roses in every year.

For all that the Lord Chancellor had not been satisfied. He had wanted to own the property. This, of course, had caused a great deal more trouble, and in the end he had gone to the Queen. She had made short work of the Bishop. There is a letter—some authorities say it is a spurious one—which Queen Elizabeth is alleged to have written on this occasion to the Bishop of Ely. Here it is :

Proud Prelate,

You know what you were before I made you what you are ; and I would have you to know that I who made you can unmake you. If you do not immediately comply with my request by God I will unfrock you.

ELIZABETH.

Whether the letter was genuine or the Queen's own peremptory forcefulness settled the matter, the Lord Bishop had made no more bones about complying. A mortgage had been arranged and conveyed to the Queen. The Queen had promptly conveyed it to Sir Christopher Hatton, and it was supposed to be redeemable upon payment by the See of Ely of £1,800. But neither the Queen nor her Lord Chancellor had any intention of letting it be redeemed and, after the death of the disgusted prelate, the bishopric was allowed to

## *Hatton House in Holborn*

lapse. It lapsed for eighteen years. By that time the Lord Chancellor was dead, and Lady Elizabeth Hatton was in possession of Hatton House.

She occupied rather more of the Bishop's property than appeared in the mortgage deed. For Sir Christopher Hatton had helped himself to various unconsidered trifles when there was no one to say him nay. He had turned the crypt under the chapel into a sort of tavern, using part of it as a buttery, and allowing the burial vault to be made a rendezvous for drinking, from which sounds of carousal rose during Divine Service, and mingled with the chanting in the chapel above.

The parts of the palace that became Hatton House were the gatehouse (barring two rooms used as prisons) the porter's lodge—the first courtyard—the stables—the long gallery with the rooms above and below—and some others. To this tidy slice of the episcopal buildings Sir Christopher Hatton had added more rooms of his own and harmonized the whole into an imposing, graceful mansion.

Its garden was a picture. Those twenty bushels of roses were never missed. The eye was ravished by the beauty and the number of the roses that remained. There were, besides, lilies and heartsease and rosemary and cloves, and wide beds of delicious strawberries. Fountains played where they could best be seen. There were fishponds and arbours, and a long row of beehives, and a big, blind dovecot with pigeons flying in and out of the roof. In spring, violets grew in the borders, and jacinths and primroses. There were great yellow sun-flowers in autumn. And in winter, the charm of brown and green lay in shrubs and hedges primly shaped, and lawns and alleys and terraces and trees.

Hatton Garden still bears its name. The ghost of it lies under buildings now, and diamonds flourish where once there were flowers.

## SUITORS

AMONG THE SUITORS FOR THE HAND OF THE LADY ELIZABETH Hatton were two men who subsequently became famous. They were Francis Bacon and Edward Cooke. Francis Bacon was the great philosopher. He became Lord Chancellor, and was created Lord Verulam and Viscount St. Albans, but it is as the writer of English prose that he is best known. Edward Cooke was the celebrated exponent of English law, and became for all time famous as the fashioner of the Petition of Right which secured for the people of England their liberties. Why or when the second "o" was dropped from his name is uncertain, but it makes no difference to the way in which the word is pronounced—Cooke it was when he lived and Cooke it is to-day.

When these two suitors wooed the Lady Elizabeth Hatton they were rather unequally balanced because Francis Bacon had little to offer the lady except debts and a volume of essays just about to be published, whereas Edward Cooke was already Attorney-General. They were somewhat precipitate in their attentions, for Sir William Hatton had only been dead a few months, but each was afraid the other would steal a march on him if he did not come forward.

They were rivals in the legal profession as well as in their matrimonial aspirations, and it is not too much to say that Edward Cooke was Francis Bacon's *bête noire*, and that Francis Bacon in the opinion of Edward Cooke was "less than the least." Indeed, there came a time when they said as much.

## *Francis Bacon proposes*

Nor did they lose any opportunity of making scenes in court when they happened to be on a case together, and they would as readily have made scenes in a lady's withdrawing-room. So it is not difficult to imagine the sort of dual courtship it was liable to be.

Francis Bacon was thirty-eight years of age, and Edward Cooke was forty-seven. There was, therefore, no *roman de la jeunesse* about the Lady Elizabeth Hatton's swains. Nor was there any particular object from her point of view to be gained by marrying either of them except for love. They could offer her nothing that she did not already possess. Francis Bacon was thriftless, extravagant, and odiously self-seeking, but he showed brilliant promise. She had no need to marry promise. His character was too well known to his contemporaries for the Cecils to approve of him. They rejected his advances in spite of the urgency with which his emissary—the Earl of Essex—pleaded his suit.

Matters were not improved when he was taken in execution and detained for debt. Nor did he make things any better by his complaint that this summary proceeding was a breach of privilege, as he was on his way from the Tower of London in "a service of no mean importance to the Queen's Grace." On the whole his courtship and his circumstances savoured rather of fortune hunting, and were not acceptable to the Cecils.

Lady Hatton would have none of him. There was nothing to show that she was not in entire agreement with her family over the question of Francis Bacon's proposal, and he was dismissed accordingly. But they remained good friends.

This left the Attorney-General still in the running. He was steady and he was rich. He was by no means bad-looking. Lloyd thus describes him: "The jewel of his mind was put into a fair case—a beautiful body with comely countenance ;

## *The Lady of Bleeding Heart Yard*

a case which he did wipe and keep clean delighting in good clothes well worn ; being wont to say that the outward neatness of our bodies might be a monitor of purity to our souls." He was the most profound lawyer in England, though he had a caustic tongue, disagreeable manners, and an abominable temper. He could be cruel. He could be fearlessly independent. But at this period of his career he was courting advancement as well as a wife, and knew how to appear smooth and subservient both to the Queen's Majesty and to the lady of his choice, though it was a velvet paw with very sharp claws that he held out to them.

He was a widower with ten children—seven sons and three daughters—and his first wife had only been buried a few weeks, when, on the occasion of the funeral of the great Lord Burghley, he proposed to the Cecils for the hand of his second. The first wife was Bridget Paston—a descendant of the Pastons whose Letters form such an asset to our annals—and she had brought him a nice little property in Norfolk and £30,000. She died in June, 1598, at which time her eldest child was not above fifteen years of age.

The Attorney-General was certainly not a romantic figure, but the Cecils thought he would do. He would prove useful to them. He had had the wisdom to enlist Robert Cecil on his side. Robert Cecil was afterwards the first Earl of Salisbury. He was a small, crooked man with a big brain, useful to the Queen. He was the Lady Elizabeth Hatton's uncle, and he was Secretary of State, and accustomed to get his way in the family.

Somehow the lady found herself engaged to the Attorney-General. But she showed no enthusiasm in the proceedings, and refused to allow her engagement to be made public.

It was a time when irregular marriages were forbidden by the Church. The Archbishop of Canterbury—Archbishop



Vultum (clare) tuum sculpsit cum incidere, arti  
 Diffidit solere sculpsit et ipse sua  
 Artem materies quoniam superaret, et una  
 Contulerant Vultus Dign. Deas suas. *Si Papius sculp. Van*  
 Si tam celestis Orideatur corporis umbra, *Comptis Holland*  
 Quantum eius menti reris inesse locus. *ascendit.* A.H.

SIR EDWARD COKE

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## *Weds the Attorney-General*

Whitgift—had made it abundantly clear that any infringement of Church Rules in this matter would be followed by imprisonment, excommunication, and confiscation of property. A marriage must be performed in church or chapel by banns or licence at the proper hours appointed. Otherwise dire penalties would follow.

The Lady Elizabeth Hatton knew this quite well. She had been married to Sir William Hatton with all the necessary rites, and she had lived happily with him afterwards. Indeed, up to this time, there is no reason for thinking that she was not as good as she was gifted, and as gracious as she was good. But the mere prospect of becoming the wife of Edward Cooke roused a devil in her that she could not resist. She knew that he and Archbishop Whitgift were both proud men. The Attorney-General, in fact, was the epitome of arrogance as everybody knew, and insufferable in his pride. The Archbishop of Canterbury was full of zeal, and jealous of the power of the law when it did not fall in with that of the Church, and he was determined to uphold the latter.

Lady Elizabeth Hatton laid down an ultimatum to Edward Cooke. She would set these two worthy gentlemen a problem that would take some solving. She would not marry the Attorney-General unless he married her at Hatton House—at night—and without banns or licence.

Perhaps it was just mischief. Perhaps she wanted to prove the Attorney-General's love for her, which he swore was of the most devoted. At any rate, she would see what influence she had with him for she would marry him in no other way. And if he did not like it what matter? She would not marry him at all.

It was vain for Edward Cooke to protest, to show her the ruin in which she was involving his career and her own future—vain for her father to point out the utter illegality of



## *The Lady of Bleeding Heart Yard*

the marriage. She did not care. Possibly she thought she was preparing herself a loophole for escape if, after all, she did not like being the Lady Elizabeth Cooke. Anyway she did not relent. Those were her terms. He could take them or leave them.

He took them. Edward Cooke and the Lady Elizabeth Hatton were married, secretly, on the night of November 6th, 1598,<sup>1</sup> at Hatton House in the presence of her father—then Lord Burghley as her grandfather was dead—and of the minister who performed the ceremony.

It was a serious thing for all of them. Instead of being in the cold sanctity of a church it was in a warm and mellow room of panelled walls and rich oak carving that the Attorney-General and Lady Elizabeth Hatton were made husband and wife. Curtains, hanging in graceful folds across the windows, shut out the black damp of the November evening that lay over Hatton Garden. Huge logs crackled on the hearth, spluttering flame that made the shadows dance, and played merrily on delicate ruffs and quilted doublets, slashed sleeves and tasselled shoon.

In the midst stood the beautiful, petulant lady. Candles shed their soft radiance on her quilled ruff—her jewelled bodice—the wide farthingale which swept her feet. She had proved her power over the astutest lawyer in England. Surely now he would let her have her own way as his wife.

She was only twenty. She must be forgiven if she made a mistake. The astutest lawyer soon undeceived her. He began at once to meddle with her wealth and with the affairs of her late husband. She had married again so soon that there had not been time for all the details of probate. And there was no Married Woman's Property Act to protect her interests.

<sup>1</sup> This is the date in the St. Andrew's parish register, Holborn, but Lady Elizabeth Hatton gives it as November 2nd, 1599.

## *The Queen forbids secrecy*

What was hers was also the Attorney-General's. He could do with it what he liked.

What he liked was to take possession of her entire estate and keep it to himself. He would not even allow her a share of it. She might live in her own houses as though they were his, under his rules and regulations, dependent on him for everything, and without a penny to spend. That was his idea of the relative position of property between husband and wife. When Bridget Paston died he had written in his diary : " Most beloved and most excellent wife, she well and happily lived, and, as a true handmaid of the Lord, fell asleep in the Lord and now lives and reigns in Heaven."

Bridget Paston had submitted to his precepts, and he expected her successor to do the same. This was not the Lady Elizabeth Hatton's view, however—far from it. She was well ahead of her times and believed in the emancipation of women. Nor did she see any love in the Attorney-General's methods. In her displeasure at being so deceived she would have had their marriage kept secret. She had never wanted to marry him. Now she wanted to have nothing more to do with him.

But she could not have her way. The Queen must be told and what the Queen said about it must be done.

The Queen was old. The Court was elderly. The young ones there had to comport themselves with becoming dignity, or if not quite that, with due decorum. If Queen Elizabeth did not realize that she had outgrown the exuberance of youth, and with it many youthful sympathies, other people did. She was none too pleased with this marriage tale. Why all the secrecy? She would have none of it. Young ladies must learn obedience. And the Lady Elizabeth Hatton, with the best grace she could muster, had to submit to the marriage being made public.

## *The Lady of Bleeding Heart Yard*

It was a many days' wonder. The circumstances were on everybody's tongue. And to give people more to talk about the lady refused to be called by her second husband's name. Lady Hatton—with or without the Elizabeth—she remained. She was the more generally known as Lady Hatton and she shall be called so henceforward. As for the Attorney-General, she had so little respect for him that he must be careful how he approached her and must wait for an invitation to her parties and not "thrust in" without one. With her usual candour she gave her reasons :

"If Sir Edward Cooke," said she, "would bury my first husband according to his own directions and also pay such small legacies as he gave to divers of his friends—in all coming not to above £700 or £900 at the most that was left unperformed—he having all Sir William Hatton's goods and lands to a large proportion, then would I willingly style myself by his name. But he never yielded so I consented not to the other."

The brief ceremony which had transformed the much courted and desirable young widow of Sir William Hatton into the wife of Edward Cooke had also changed a lovely and charming girl into a resentful and disillusioned woman. She had bartered liberty for security and lost them both.

In the meantime the Archbishop of Canterbury had not been idle. The irregular marriage had come up for attention. A citation from the Ecclesiastical Court called upon Edward Cooke, Lady Hatton, Lord Burghley and Henry Bathwell, the minister who performed the ceremony, to appear and answer to the charge against them. And it opened up a whole train of legal proceedings which, under the circumstances, could only end in imprisonment and excommunication.

The Attorney-General could think of but one way out of the predicament. He went to the Archbishop of Canterbury

## *Elizabeth and Frances Coke*

and pleaded ignorance of ecclesiastical law. Thus had my lady made a fool of him. Thus was his pride humbled and his veracity called in question. It was a very unpleasant position.

The Archbishop of Canterbury saw it all. Surely it must have been with a twinkle in his eye that after frightening them with threats he gave the delinquents a dispensation under his great seal. The proceedings were stayed. But in the archives of Lambeth Palace is the absolution just as Archbishop Whitgift sealed it—a proof to posterity of which he was very well aware that however carefully we may think we have wiped out our sins the record of them lives on for centuries after we are dead.

When Lady Hatton and the Attorney-General had been married a few years two daughters were born to them. Their names were Elizabeth and Frances. Lady Hatton adored them both. The Attorney-General promised to settle all her estate on these children, and any land that he might purchase after her marriage with him. He did not keep his promise.

And then the trouble began.

### III

#### *DAYS AT COURT, AND SIR EDWARD COKE*

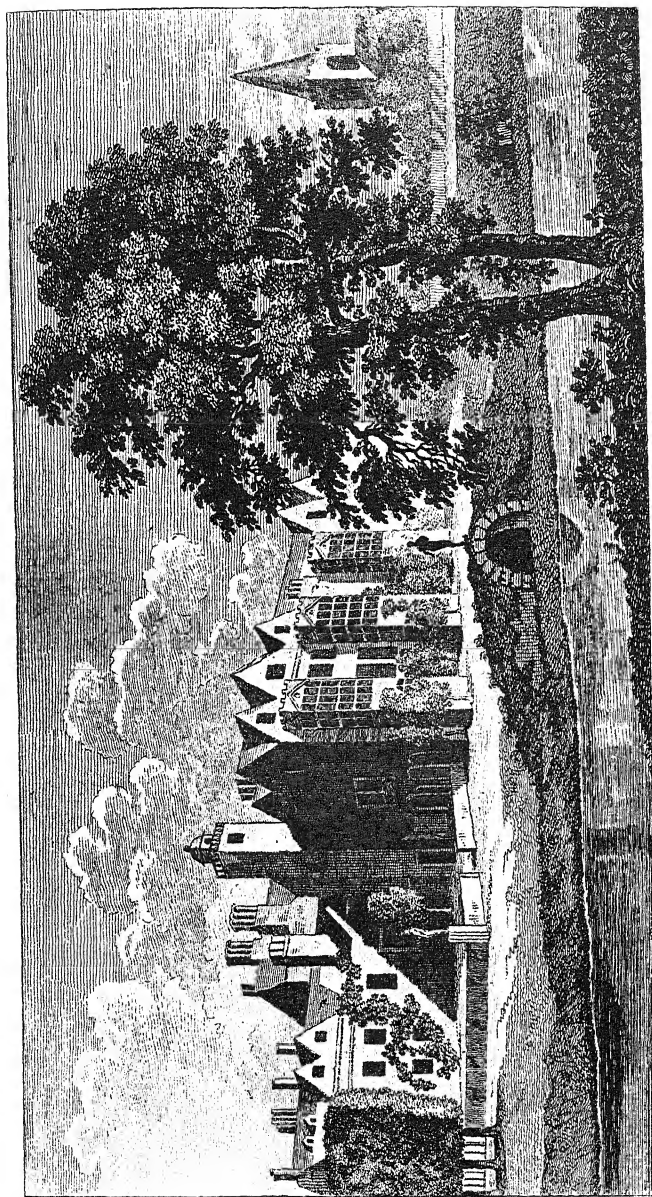
IN 1601 EDWARD COOKE ENTERTAINED QUEEN ELIZABETH IN great state at his manor house at Stoke Poges. And to commemorate the occasion he gave her jewels to the value of over £1,000.

At Stoke Poges—which is only twenty-two miles from London—is to be seen what is left of Sir Edward Cooke's mansion. It has been in part pulled down—in part rebuilt—but some of it remains. And in the grounds of the park is the tall column which was built in memory of that very able judge. His house at Stoke Poges is where Lady Hatton lived with him—when she lived with him at all—and it was there he died. It was altered in 1789 by one Mr. Penn, who owned it at that date. He was a descendant of the founder of Pennsylvania. One wing is standing of the mansion of Queen Elizabeth's Attorney-General—but hardly enough to see what kind of home he had, or to locate him there.

In spite of the sumptuous entertainment and the jewels worth over £1,000 Queen Elizabeth did not give him a knighthood. It was sufficient that she should have honoured his mansion with her presence. And he had to wait for a vacancy before he could be raised to the Bench.

Queen Elizabeth died on March 24th, 1603, and King James I came soon after from Scotland to take possession of his new kingdom. But owing to the plague raging fiercely in London there was some delay over the actual coronation.

Lady Hatton lost no time in paying her respects at Court.



STOKE MANOR

From R. Bentley's Illustrations to Gray's Poems, 1753



## Christmas in 1603

And the Attorney-General did his part in helping to pave the way for the reception of the new royal family as smoothly as could be wished.

Anne of Denmark—consort of James I—was only a few years older than Lady Hatton, and she liked her at once. Anne of Denmark had not Lady Hatton's wit and intelligence, but she was constant in her affections, which is a great thing, and Lady Hatton soon won a very good place in them. Both ladies were fond of parties of all sorts. They loved pastorals and plays, masques and music, banquets—interludes—and dancing—to say nothing of water pageants and hawking. They loved them on a grand scale, which is always rather expensive.

Lady Hatton began to spend a lot of her time at Court. And she was at Court for Christmas in the first year of the new reign.

The previous Christmas had been gloomy to those about Queen Elizabeth. There were many who realized that it might be her last. A few were glad and many were sorry, but either way it had been a dull time, weighted with the cares of sickness and age. Very different was the Christmas of 1603. King James I had planned to show how well he could make the season merry, and the only fear was that he might surfeit his subjects with festivities. The King and Queen moved to Hampton Court about the middle of December, and then the gaieties began.

Lady Hatton joined in everything with a very good grace. And when the masque called *The Vision of the Twelve Goddesses* was performed she was chosen for the part of one of them. The Queen elected to be another. Mr. William Shakespeare and Mr. Francis Bacon had the pleasure of seeing them in this rôle, but as the Attorney-General had a profound contempt for actors and anything to do with the theatre and is supposed



## *The Lady of Bleeding Heart Yard*

never to have so much as seen a play performed, there is no reason to think that he was present on this occasion.

The masque took place in the Great Hall of Hampton Court Palace, the beautiful tracery of which was fitted with fairy lights, which threw a soft glow into the space in the centre and flooded the actors when they came into it. The Great Hall supplied its own scenery—gorgeous stained-glass windows—richly carved screens—priceless tapestries. But they were not altogether in keeping with mythology.

Indeed, what with the seats for the spectators and the machinery (concealed), the general *mise-en-scène*, the King's dais and the public, the Great Hall hardly looked great at all. And it was terribly crowded.

At one end rose, from floor to roof, a fine representation of a mountain, the rocks and trees of which hid the goddesses and graces until the moment came for them to appear in view. Minstrels, dressed as satyrs, sat among the rocks, and played a triumphant march as the goddesses and graces, three by three and hand in hand—most sumptuously arrayed in cloth of gold and silver and embroidered satin from Queen Elizabeth's wardrobe—came majestically down the mountain-side. They were followed by torch-bearers clad in white, each one spangled with stars of gold and carrying lighted tapers of gilded wax, very tall. The scene was so arranged that all the goddesses and graces were to be seen together on the mountain at the same time. The masque was a fairly long one, and it was followed by dancing. When both were over the banquet began, and the enormous crowds surged in to enjoy it.

To see Hampton Court Palace as it is now—so quiet, so sedate—it is difficult to realize what it was like during a party in the reign of James I. There was hardly room to move. Women in wide farthingales and enormous ruffs got

## *King James I*

wedged in the passages and ante-rooms, unable to go forward or to go back. The stairs were like a gigantic slowly moving caterpillar. They could not be seen for the crush. And though there were as many as 700 rooms in the palace, tents had to be set up outside for the accommodation of the retainers of the visitors who thronged in from every side.

The King of England kept open house. He could have no privacy. And anybody might come and seek a fortune at Court with comparatively little difficulty. So the King was the last person to know how many visitors he would have at his entertainments. No wonder that James I—who was a timid man—wore a padded doublet and rolled his eyes from side to side in trepidation at newcomers.

As for the banquets—there may have been some effort to limit the number of guests and even to invite only those chosen by the King and Queen, but the banquets themselves were nevertheless “despatched with the usual confusion.”

The truth is that the new Court was by no means staid and decorous. King James I was not at all nice in his ways. He set bad examples—was too fond of liquor and of ribaldry, which led him into making an exhibition both of himself and his Court. At the best of times he was unattractive. He wore his clothes so large and so thickly quilted that they gave him the appearance of being out of proportion, for he was only of middle height, and rather round. His beard was scraggy, his lips ugly, his tongue too big for his mouth, and when he drank he dribbled, and when he spoke he shuffled his words. His skin was of silky softness, but though he kept it oiled he did not keep it washed, and it is related that in course of time he became the colour of mahogany. There are always courtiers to follow in the ways of a king even in his personal habits—so it is not hard to imagine what his parties were like. And though the Queen tried her best to

## *The Lady of Bleeding Heart Yard*

keep his hilarity and his manners within bounds she did not always succeed.

There was usually a terrible scramble, and down went tables and trestles with the press of impatient guests. Food and liquids splashed over the floor to be rendered unfit for use, and sometimes before anybody had tasted anything.

At another of the Queen's masques Sir Ralph Winwood—Mr. Secretary Winwood—says that : “ There was no small loss that night of chains and jewels, and many great ladies were made shorter by their skirts, and were very well served that they could cut no better.” Which gives some idea of the sort of society functions Lady Hatton found herself obliged to attend if she wanted to go to Court.

And, of course, she did want to go to Court. She knew no other life. Besides, she was so unhappy that she had to do something to take her out of herself. There are different ways of compensating for unhappy marriages. Lady Hatton chose two of them. She let her daughters fill her heart and society occupy her mind. She joined Anne of Denmark's round of pleasures, and gave parties at Hatton House. She went hawking at Corfe Castle. Sometimes the King and Queen went too. Of the Attorney-General she saw as little as she might.

Edward Cooke got on quite well without her. He was far more interested in his work than he was in his wife, and had besides a family of twelve children to settle in life. He made no effort that has ever come to light to conciliate the lady. He may have thought himself too busy. Scarcely a case of importance came on in Westminster Hall that did not see him concerned with it. His ability was popular if his manners were not, and he had no need to canvass for briefs. During the reign of Queen Elizabeth he had been elected Speaker of the House of Commons (February, 1593), and he

## *Sir Walter Raleigh*

had much to do with the prosecution of State prisoners. He had been conspicuous at the trial of the Earls of Essex and Southampton, and had displayed, in his zeal to please Her Majesty, not only his own usual arrogance but an exaggeration of the facts, scarcely becoming in an Attorney-General. Early in the reign of James I he was knighted.

He was conspicuous again during the trial of Sir Walter Raleigh after James I came to the throne.

He called Sir Walter Raleigh, among other things, "a spider of hell, a viper and a monster," during the course of the trial, and only when the Judge—Chief Justice Popham—and Mr. Secretary Cecil interposed did he bring his terrible torrent of abuse to an end.

"Sir Walter," said the Judge to the prisoner, "Mr. Attorney speaks out of the zeal of his duty for the service of the King, and you for your life. Be patient on both sides."

And Mr. Secretary Cecil appealed to his nephew-in-law: "Be not so impatient, good Mr. Attorney," said he, "give him leave to speak."

"I am the King's sworn servant," retorted the irate Attorney-General, "and must speak. If I may not be patiently heard you discourage the King's Counsel and encourage traitors." And he sat down in a rage.

When the gunpowder plot came up for attention he had another opportunity for airing his vocabulary, and did it with equal vigour. Soon afterwards he was raised to the Bench—June 30th, 1606—as Chief Justice of the Common Pleas.

Up to this time he had been most circumspect in his deportment towards his Sovereign. He had been subservient to Queen Elizabeth. He had flattered King James. But from the hour that he became a judge he put justice before policy. Neither James I nor anybody else could shake his

## *The Lady of Bleeding Heart Yard*

resolution. He was the very essence of the Law, and he neither accepted nor encouraged bribes. He was incorruptible.

But like many other people who are incorruptible in public matters he had lapses when it came to his own private concerns.

He was in a position to know a good deal about the Crown debts, and among them was the balance of that £42,000 owing by the late Sir Christopher Hatton to Queen Elizabeth, which at her death had reverted to the Crown. Instead of declaring it, Sir Edward Coke—his name is now written that way—contrived to get a finger in the pie—but without the concurrence of Lady Hatton. He obtained a transference of the lease to four other persons, of whom he was himself one, and induced the heir to sign a bond agreeing *not* to pay off the balance of the Crown debt.

No doubt the heir entered into the transaction in good faith. A suggestion put forward by a judge so eminent and so respected could not be questioned. And by the time he had finished his ponderous legal arguments the heir—Sir Christopher Hatton—was bewildered into agreeing with anything. The rents, of course, were Lady Hatton's for the time being, but as she was not allowed to control them it made no difference to her. She was, in fact, not even consulted. For three years she and her husband had struggled over a statute of £40,000 "made for the performance of promises" which Edward Coke had acknowledged at the time of the marriage in order to gain possession of the lady. But no sooner was he possessed of her than he grumbled at it, "and continued so hot and unkind as he took from her bailey all the Michaelmas rents due to her before marriage, and because her bailey would not at first deliver them up he clapped him in prison, and to release the bailey she had no way but to let Edward Coke have the money, which she did." As for the statute,

## *Coke shows his claws*

after many discourtesies and unquiet proceedings, Lady Hatton gave it to him for quietness' sake, and because during those three years she had not received a penny for her maintenance, and he was full of promises if she would but part with the statute. When she did so he sent her £100, which she confessed she whirled among her servants that attended her ; and "willing she should believe he would do something upon delivery of the Statute he made a conveyance to her of the manor of North Elmham in Norfolk, amongst other things in part of her jointure, which conveyance he desired she would not enroll ; but understanding by some of her friends that unless it were enrolled within six months it would be void, by their advice she caused it to be enrolled, whereof when he had knowledge, secretly and without acquainting her or any of her friends, procured a new patent from the Crown as upon a defective title, for a fine of twenty marks, in the names of two of his servants, whereby he defeated his wife and her children of that manor and of other things worth £1000 per annum."

After this he "sold away the onely daughter of her good husband Sir William Hatton for £4000, to whom though she was but a stepmother, Sir William Hatton's confidence in her was such as made him in his lifetime procure the wardship of his daughter for his wife and upon his death he charged her with the care of the child. Nevertheless, when Sir Edward Coke came to demand her from her stepmother he most tyrannously broke open her doores and took her away ; yet afterwards he gave a note under his hand and promised to bestow the said £4000 for the benefit of Lady Hatton and her children, and thereupon purchasing Minster Lovell in Oxfordshire, conveyed it accordingly to them, and publickly before the tenants styled her their landlady and owner of the manor ; and for this purpose carried her down

## *The Lady of Bleeding Heart Yard*

thither, and notwithstanding had since taken it from them and estated it upon his second son by Bridget Paston, Arthur Coke."

Frances Hatton married Sir Robert Rich, eldest son of the Earl of Warwick, who in course of time inherited the title, and became the famous Earl of Warwick of the Civil Wars, and during the Commonwealth. He was conspicuous on the side of the Roundheads, and as Admiral of the Fleet for the Long Parliament.

Lady Hatton's feelings were outraged at this treatment of herself and her stepdaughter—to say nothing of her own children—and she was furious at her husband's breach of covenants, but there was nothing she could do. The law protected him. She went to her father, the Earl of Exeter, and her uncle, the Earl of Salisbury, and laid her grievances before them. They called the Attorney-General, and by their mediation he agreed to make his wife an allowance from her own means, which for a time he did.

Then, unluckily, another matter arose to vex him. Sir Walter Ashton chose to marry Lady Hatton's gentlewoman, and this so enraged Edward Coke that—to use Lady Hatton's own words—though the lady in question was of "a good house and well allied, and they were lawfully married and sufficient witnesses, yet it pleased him to break it, and his rage was such as he came violently into my chamber, rent my ruff from my neck offering unworthy blows before he asked me question of the marriage ; which I vow before God and whosoever shall read this paper I am no more guilty of than the child newborn. At about the same time he brake open my closet and cabinet and took away the foresaid note of hand of £4,000 which made so great a break between us as I remained at my father's, the Earl of Exeter's, for a whole year after, I must confess with a resolution ever there to continue,

## *Rivalry renewed*

had not the Great Queen Elizabeth commanded my dear father and uncle to reconcile us, and promised to see that her Attorney should use me well and perform all promises. Her Majesty died in short time after."

The death of the Queen removed any check there may have been on the conduct of Edward Coke, and between his wife and himself the breach only grew wider with the years.

In 1613 he became Chief Justice of the King's Bench, and a few days later he was sworn of the Privy Council. This was promotion—but of honour rather than fees—and Sir Edward Coke would have preferred to remain where his work was more lucrative. His old enemy, Francis Bacon, now King's Attorney, was at the bottom of the move, for it was his persuasive eloquence with the King that had caused the change in the fortunes of his rival.

Sir Edward Coke was well aware of it. Meeting Francis Bacon one day he told him so.

"Mr. Attorney," said he, "this is all your doing. It is you that have made this stir."

Francis Bacon did not deny it, but he answered him :

"Ah, my lord, your lordship all this while hath grown in breadth ; you must needs now grow in highth, else you would be a monster."

Which did not improve the feelings between them.

With the change in their positions they now came frequently in contact with each other, and as they were perpetually at loggerheads the enmity which had always been so conspicuous was soon out of bounds. Francis Bacon left no stone unturned to undermine Sir Edward Coke with the King. His methods were of the underhand, back-biting variety—suave and subtle. His enemy was downright and open, and trusted more to his own person and his vocabulary, than to persuasion of others. But he unwittingly played into his rival's hands



## *The Lady of Bleeding Heart Yard*

where the King was concerned, because he had thrown over all obsequiousness towards James I, and was very soon in that monarch's black books.

For instance, he had no hesitation in telling His Majesty that "the King had no power to adjudge any case, either criminal or between party and party, but that it ought to be determined in some Court of Justice."

King James replied that he thought the law was founded on reason, and that he and others had reason as well as the judges.

"True it is," answered Sir Edward Coke, "that God hath endowed Your Majesty with excellent science and great endowments of nature, but Your Majesty is not learned in the laws of the realm of England."

As King James I prided himself that he was learned in everything this was not to be tolerated from a mere judge.

Presently matters grew worse. Sir Edward Coke came heavily to grief over what the facetious called "The Four P's." They were Pride, Prohibitions, Præmunire, and Prerogative.

When the trials for the murder of Sir Thomas Overbury came on for hearing he so far forgot himself as to address the prisoners with the most appalling language from the Bench, even before a verdict had been given. And this trial, indirectly, is a reminder of Lady Hatton, the Devil, and Bleeding Heart Yard. For it was the custom in those days for people to consult necromancers—even Queen Elizabeth had had her own special wizard, a Dr. Dee—and practically the whole Court was numbered in the clientele of a Dr. Forman of Lambeth, a celebrated charlatan of his time. It was proved that the prisoners—murderers of Sir Thomas Overbury—had been in the habit of consulting Dr. Forman, and that he kept a book in which he requested all who consulted him to

## *Sir Christopher Hatton's bond*

sign their names. This book was called for in Sir Edward Coke's Court to prove certain statements of the prisoners.

"Whereupon," said Sir Anthony Weldon—a contemporary—"there was much mirth made in the Court upon the showing of this book, for it was reported the first leaf my Lord Cooke lighted on he found his own wife's name."

Lady Hatton had been consulting the sorcerer on her own account without any idea that it was to involve her in a reputation for practising the black arts, and being run away with by the Devil—a reputation which would long outlive her real history.

Sir Edward Coke was himself running into deep waters of another sort. In 1616 his sin with regard to Sir Christopher Hatton's Bond found him out. The balance of the money owing to the Crown had been paid on behalf of the heir by Sir Robert Rich—husband of Frances Hatton—and Sir Edward Coke was required to give up his share of the lease. He was, moreover, called on to prepare a deed relinquishing the same. Lady Hatton's signature was necessary for the proper execution of this deed, but so far her ladyship did not know it.

There was still more trouble brewing. Sir Edward Coke had opposed the King's lack of knowledge of the laws of England once too often, and Francis Bacon had persuaded James I to summon him before the Privy Council.

In addition to the technical charges he was called on to answer was the question of breach of duty in concealing Sir Christopher Hatton's Bond, which Francis Bacon had ferreted out triumphantly.

So the Chief Justice of the King's Bench was called before the Council. His answers to the charges preferred against him would not have satisfied King James I whatever they were—for the King's object was to remove him.

## *The Lady of Bleeding Heart Yard*

A few days later he was again called before the Privy Council to hear the Earl of Suffolk, acting for the King, thus pronounce sentence on him :

Sir Edward Coke, I am commanded by His Majesty to inform you that His Majesty is by no means satisfied with your excuses. Yet, out of regard to your former services, he is not disposed to deal with you heavily, and therefore has decreed :—First that you be sequestered the Council Chamber until His Majesty's pleasure be further known.

Second—that you forbear to ride your summer circuit as justice of assize.

Third—that during the vacation, while you have time to live privately and dispose yourself at home, you take into consideration and review your Book of Reports, wherein, as His Majesty is informed, be many extravagant and exorbitant opinions, set down and published for positive and good law. Amongst other things, the King is not well pleased with the title of the book, wherein you entitle yourself “ Lord Chief Justice of England ” whereas by law you can challenge no more than Lord Chief Justice of the King's Bench.

To conclude, I have yet another cause of complaint against you. His Majesty is credibly informed that you have suffered your coachman to ride bareheaded before you, and His Majesty desires that this may be forborne in future.

To which the Chief Justice of the King's Bench made answer : “ I submit myself humbly to His Majesty's pleasure. But this I beg your Lordships to take notice of, that if my coachman hath rode before me bareheaded, he did it at his own ease, and not by my order.” He then went home, to carry out the King's commands and to meditate on the peculiarities of Prerogative.

But Francis Bacon could not leave him in peace. He cunningly, and with much persistence, kept the disgraced Judge in lurid colours before the eyes of James I. And,

## *Sir Edward Coke disgraced*

having moulded the King's mind against him, sent His Majesty the following letter :

May it please your Excellent Majesty,

I send your Majesty a form of discharge for my Lord Coke from his place of Chief Justice of your Bench. I send also a warrant to the Lord Chancellor for making forth a Writ for a new Chief Justice, leaving a blank for the name to be supplied by your Majesty's presence ; for I never received your Majesty's express pleasure in it. . . .

The King swallowed the bait.

On November 16th in the same year—1616—Sir Edward Coke received a *supersedeas* couched in these words ; signed by the King and sealed with the Great Seal :

For certain causes moving us we will that you shall be no longer our Chief Justice to hold place before us ; and we command that you no longer interfere in that office. And by virtue of this presence we at once remove and exonerate you from same.

It nearly broke Sir Edward Coke's heart.

## IV

### PROPOSALS OF MARRIAGE

WHEN THE STORY OF SIR CHRISTOPHER HATTON'S BOND broke on Lady Hatton's ears, and she found that she was expected to add her signature to her husband's release, her indignation knew no bounds. And when to this were added various other matters connected with her dowry which did not meet with her approval, she separated from him entirely, taking with her everything she could lay hands on that had belonged to her first husband, or that belonged to herself.

Sir Edward Coke did not take this lying down. And what with one thing and another the pair soon found themselves fighting out their grievances before the Council Table. This was before the arrival of the *supersedeas* to Sir Edward Coke.

Lady Hatton arrived at the Council with a large gathering of relations and friends, among whom were my Lord and Lady Burleigh—it was spelt like that then—my Lord Danvers, my Lord Denny and his wife (who was Lady Hatton's sister Mary), Sir Thomas Howard and Lady Howard, and many more besides. With imposing majesty and a haughty air, Lady Hatton took her place to plead her own cause. And so well did she do it that Sir Edward Coke—oracle of the law as he was—was quite eclipsed by her forensic skill. Indeed, it was said afterwards that she so carried herself that the greatest actor of the day—Burbage—could not have done better. Sir Edward Coke, in his attempts to oppose her, cut only a sorry figure and subsided like a pricked balloon.

## *A dispute at council table*

Among the accusations he brought against his lady was that she “disfurnished his house at Holborn and at Stoke Poges, and carried away all the movables and plate she could come by. And that she embezzled all his gilt and silver plate and vessell, and instead thereof foisted alkumy of the same sort, fashion, and use, with the illusion to have cheated him of the other.”

“His house at Holborn” belonged to Lady Hatton, and it has even been rumoured that Sir Edward Coke came by Stoke Poges through foreclosing on a mortgage Lady Hatton held upon the property, which had formerly belonged to my Lord of Huntingdon. And she promptly replied to his accusations by saying that she had taken only what was her own.

“He having little,” said she, “in any house of mine but that his marriage with me brought him.”

She dismissed the other charges with a toss of her handsome head. “I made such plate for matter and form for my own use at Purbeck, that serving well enough in the country; and I was loth to trust such a substance in a place so remote and in the guard of few; but for the plate and vessell he saith it is wanting they are every ounce within one of my three houses.”

Then she began her own complaints. “He and his fightinge sonne Clement threatened my servants so grievously that the men ran away to hide themselves, not daring to appear Abroad.”

Sir Edward Coke could not deny it, and the lady went on: “He broke into Hatton House, secured my coach and coach horses. Nay, my apparel, which he detained; thrusts all my servants out of doors without wages; sends down his men to Corfe to inventory, seize, ship and carry away all the goods, which being refused him by the castle keeper, he threats to

## *The Lady of Bleeding Heart Yard*

bring your Lordship's warrant for the performance thereof. But your Lordship established that he should have the use of the goods only during his life, in such houses as the same appertained, without meaning I hope of depriving me of such use, being goods I brought at my marriage, or bought with the money I spared from my allowances. Stop, then, his high, tyrannical courses ; for I have suffered beyond measure of any wife, mother, nay of any ordinary woman in this kingdom, without respect of my father, my birth, my fortune, with which I have so highly raised him."

The Council was impressed. But to stop Sir Edward Coke's high, tyrannical courses was another matter. An effort was made, however, to conciliate the pair, and according to Mr. John Chamberlain—a voluminous letter-writer of the day—Sir Edward Coke's "curst heart hath been forced to yield more than ever he meant ; but upon this agreement he flatters himself she will prove a very good wife."

And so she might—given a different husband—but it were as easy to expect fire and water to mix well together as Sir Edward Coke and the Lady Elizabeth Hatton.

Yet in spite of this, and of all that had gone before, she was ready to stand by him in his hour of need. And when the storm broke that carried away the judgeship she went to live with him at their manor-house at Stoke Poges, taking her daughter Frances to comfort him.

Mr. John Chamberlain, in a letter dated June 22nd, 1616, says that "the Lady Hatton stood by him in great stead, both in soliciting at the Council Table, wherein she hath done herself great honour, but especially in refusing to sever her cause from his, as she was moved to do, but resolving and publishing that she would run the same fortune with him."

## *Lady Hatton upholds Coke*

It was one of the fine gestures of a forceful character. She could renounce self to stand by a husband whom she neither loved nor honoured, and who made no effort either to understand her or to make her happy. She had a high standard of duty, else had she never married him at the bidding of her family or thrown in her lot with his now that most he needed her. She was fearless, honest, and she was always anxious to set a wrong right, whosoever it might be.

She offered to do what she could with the King and Queen—for she was still Anne of Denmark's great friend—and set off accordingly to Court. But tact had never been one of Lady Hatton's strong points, and she arrived like a whirlwind sweeping all before her. Among other things she swept the royal patience, and by the time she had finished her advocacy of Sir Edward Coke's cause she had offended the King and Queen so deeply that she was forbidden to come again to Court.

She then returned to Stoke Poges, and there for the present she stayed with Sir Edward Coke and her daughter Frances in that manor-house of which so little now remains, endeavouring to make him feel by her presence that if she was never at any time a loving wife, at least she was a dutiful one in adversity.

It was Sir Edward Coke's own fault that these good intentions did not last. He did not meet her half-way—or any of the way. He considered concession—on his part—derogatory to dignity, and expected her to do all she had done merely because she was his wife. He lacked appreciation of the value of encouragement. So he elaborated a scheme for the future without consulting her—which under the circumstances was somewhat riling—and made plans for reinstating himself in the royal favour which ill-requited Lady Hatton's generous impulse, inasmuch as they were at the expense of Frances, and



## *The Lady of Bleeding Heart Yard*

were such that he could not possibly expect Lady Hatton to sanction them.

He therefore negotiated these plans in secret, and they were all but ready to be executed when Lady Hatton heard of them.

Up to this time Sir Edward Coke had not interfered much with Frances. He was not particularly interested in small children, and until his own could be made useful, or settled on life, he did not trouble overmuch about them. But he expected them to be obedient and to remember that his word was law.

He had similar ideas about the duties of a wife. He had visions of holding the same despotic sway at home as he held in the King's Bench. Bridget Paston had fulfilled the conditions required of her—but, then, poor lady, she had had ten children in sixteen years, which left her little time for argument, and she had lived on her property in Norfolk, being far too busy to run about elsewhere. Sir Edward Coke had come to her whenever he had chosen to do so, and had always found her minding the children and keeping the house. And although, in his opinion, this was just as it should be she had died, unfortunately, of the strain of it.

He had expected Lady Hatton to be another Bridget Paston. And how a girl of twenty had dared to oppose him as Lady Hatton had done he had never been able to understand. She was too wealthy and her family too powerful for him to treat her as summarily as he could have wished, though he came very near it. And while he was adamant when there was any question of manors or money to be dealt with, he conceded a mother's right to the custody of her children, in as much as he already had ten others, and so far as Lady Hatton's were concerned she supplied their every want and relieved him of the trouble.

When the two little girls were growing up, and the time

## *A marriage settlement*

came for the question of Elizabeth's marriage to be raised, there might easily have been dissension ; but fortunately Lady Hatton approved of the prospective bridegroom. He was Sir Maurice Berkeley, a scion of the noble family of that name, and eminently suitable to become her son-in-law. For this reason—though she refused to be a party to any of her husband's plans—she encouraged her daughter to consent to them.

Sir Edward Coke promised £4,000 for Elizabeth's marriage portion, but only gave £3,500. The following letter, undated, written by Lady Hatton to her lawyer, Sir John Hobart, seems to refer to Elizabeth and her marriage settlements, but if so her expectations of her husband's generosity were greater than their fulfilment warranted. The letter is now in the Bodleian Library at Oxford, signed in the lady's big, bold hand "Eliza Hatton."

*To my assured loving Frend Sir John Hobart give this at the Spetall.*

Sir,

For your answer concernying my elder and yonger doughter it was thatt which I truly botht mentt and answered you and for this second moscion I can saye noe more but I pray god any of myne maye bee so hapy as to mach in so noble and honourable a famyley ; and for her porsion as it is I account it wortht more then ten thousand pound for shee hath 700£ a yeare lande which beeing most of it norfolke land canot bee les wortht then twenty yeares porchas then is it not les worth then 24000£ and I assuer my selfe her father will give her 3000£ att her marage, which 3000£ present and the 4000£ aboufe the 2000£ in reversion this makes full tenne thousand ; now if this much maye sofyse, my Lord is a man apte I noufe to bee dellt witt hall for the good of his doughter, but my selfe wilbe no mosciner [motioner] nor folower of any my Lordes bisnesses, I will only lyke it If my Lord moufe me ; and ferder all I maye ; his doughter or my Lord of northamton in

## *The Lady of Bleeding Heart Yard*

my openyon are best to bee dellt witt hall but I leave it to whome you or the contrary side shall fynd fitter ; but Leet this bee to your selfe.

For the cheayne of pearle If it will come for 24/ a pearle thatt is 700*£* I will have it and thanke you, but I will never have it to paye 6d. more ; this If thee that owe it lyke I will redeme itt when the next daye of paiment come in ; this is all I thinke . . . . . this shalbe performed your assured frend *ELIZA HATTON*

some pearles are worth 28/ and some agayne are not worth 8/ a pese.

Elizabeth was duly married to Sir Maurice Berkeley, and became the mother of a daughter, but there is reason to think she died young, leaving Lady Hatton with only Frances to live for and to love.

Unfortunately Frances was old enough to be turned to advantage by her crusty old father. He planned to make the most of her undeniable attractions, her numerous accomplishments, and the very large fortune to which as her mother's daughter she was heir.

And Frances was really lovely. She was fair, with delicate colouring. She had eyes that sparkled and languished by turns, a dimpled mouth, a radiant smile. She was witty. She was winsome. And nobody knew what she was going to say or do next, which was always entertaining. She was an exquisite thing—as fresh as a rosebud and as full of promise as a day in spring.

Lady Hatton had her own views for the future of Frances. That she would be difficult in the choice of a husband for her goes without saying. Indeed, there were few young men at Court who would be in the least likely to suit.

Sir Edward Coke's plans to benefit himself at the expense of his daughter involved precisely this very question. At that time the Villiers family were first favourites with James I,

## *Sir John Villiers*

and in particular George Villiers, whom King James had created Earl of Buckingham early in 1616 and turned into a marquis early in 1617. George Villiers was looking round for comfortable places and large fortunes for his dull and impecunious relations, and had selected Frances Coke as a likely bride for his elder brother—Sir John Villiers—a dismal knight a good deal older than herself, and—what was much worse—a man who was repugnant to her.

While Sir Edward Coke was still Chief Justice of the King's Bench, Sir John Villiers had approached him with regard to a marriage with Frances, but the proud Judge had scorned the unprepossessing bridegroom, though there are contemporary hints that had he viewed the proposal with favour he might have been Lord Chancellor in time. He stood, however, upon his dignity, little guessing how soon afterwards he would be coming to the Marquis of Buckingham as a suppliant. He was the more anxious to please him because he had, apart from his rejection of the marriage proposal, come under the displeasure of the Marquis for refusing him the disposal of the chief clerkship of the Court of King's Bench—a sinecure worth £4,000 a year—and he now realized that only by trying to erase the impression created in the mind of the notorious favourite by these unfortunate occurrences, would it ever be possible for him to regain any place in his profession. As for the King it was well known that whatever the Marquis of Buckingham would have, that would His Majesty have also.

So Frances was to be the sacrifice. Her father knew her feelings for Sir John Villiers, but the duty of a daughter came before feelings, or anything else, and he had no doubt whatever of his ability to bring her to the point of obedience.

He was not so sure of his wife. In fact, he could not conceal from himself that he was in for a very unpleasant quarter of

## *The Lady of Bleeding Heart Yard*

an hour, when Lady Hatton came to hear of the proposal, for Lady Hatton disapproved strongly of the whole family of Villiers, and if there was—besides himself—one person more than another whom she could not tolerate, it was their mother—Lady Compton.

Lady Compton was the daughter of one Mr. Anthony Beaumont, and she had been thrice married—first to Sir George Villiers, whose second wife she was—second to Sir William Rayner—and third to Sir Thomas Compton, brother of the Earl of Northampton. She was a lady of formidable characteristics and forbidding appearance. At Hampton Court Palace there is a portrait of her. It is a striking portrait of the entire Villiers family—barring the Lady Compton's stepchildren—and if they may be judged by appearances the female members of it were singularly unprepossessing. They were elaborately gowned, however, to make up for any lack of loveliness, and there was a great display of puffed sleeves, tight bodices, gauntlet cuffs, laces and ribbons.

The portrait was painted after the marriage of the Marquis of Buckingham, and includes his wife and two of his children, besides the Lady Compton, her three sons—John, George and Christopher—and her daughter Susannah, Lady Denbigh. There is no doubt which of them all is the Lady Compton. She is conspicuous in an enormous round ruff from which rises her much-frizzed head, like a hub from a wheel, and she is as stiff as though she had been fixed to a dentist's chair—all starch and staybones. And if there is one thing about her more noteworthy than another, it is that she makes up in severity for what she lacks in grace.

Sir John Villiers has the most amiable face of the family, but it is a sad face, lacking lustre. He had much to make him sad, and not least because he was the most respectable of

SIR GEORGE VILLIERS  
 Father of the Family  
 1st Husband of the Countess of Buckingham  
 (portrait)

THE VISCOUNT PURECK  
 formerly Sir John Villiers

CHRISTOPHER VILLIERS  
 VISCOUNT ANGLESEY

THE DUKE OF BUCKINGHAM  
 GEORGE VILLIERS

THE COUNTESS OF BUCKINGHAM  
 formerly Lady Compton

MARY  
 DUCHESS OF RICHMOND

KATHARINE MANNERS  
 DUCHESS OF BUCKINGHAM

SUSANNAH  
 (later) COUNTESS OF DENBIGH

GEORGE  
 (later) 2ND DUKE OF BUCKINGHAM

## THE VILLIERS FAMILY





*By gracious permission of His Majesty the King*

THE VILLIERS FAMILY

om Hampton Court Palace





## *Sir Edward Coke plans*

the Villiers family, and did make some effort to hold his unprincipled younger brothers in check, but never with any noticeable result.

Sir Edward Coke received him with as much affability as he could muster, and pretended to be pleased with his future son-in-law. While they were discussing plans for the marriage Sir John Villiers approached the subject of settlements as delicately as he could.

"Although," said Sir John Villiers, "I would have been pleased to have taken her in her smock, I should be glad, by way of curiosity, to know how much could be assured by marriage settlement upon her and her issue."

Sir Edward Coke replied by propounding the young lady's expectations from her mother, adding that he would augment them by the manor of Stoke Poges in reversion, and in the meantime by a dowry of £10,000 down, and an allowance of £1,000 a year.

The Marquis of Buckingham thought this insufficient, but Sir Edward Coke would not promise more, and not being much of a diplomat, or used to such delicate negotiations, promptly put his foot in it by affirming that he "would not buy the King's favour too dear."

However, Sir John Villiers was so poor that he did not stand out, and the matter was considered settled.

The time had now come when it seemed as well to acquaint Lady Hatton and Frances of Sir Edward Coke's intentions, and accordingly he broke the news to them with what preamble he thought fit.

Words fail to describe the state of mind into which Lady Hatton was thrown. She had been endeavouring to bear with her husband, as we have seen, and had been occupying the same house with him, in spite of the fact that his arrogance had not been one whit abated by his misfortunes, or his

## *The Lady of Bleeding Heart Yard*

amiability increased. For his sake she had quarrelled with the King and Queen, and could no longer go to Court, so that her usual occupations and pleasures were barred to her. In return she expected him to show some appreciation of her effort, and to respect her wishes. When therefore she found that he had made arrangements for the disposal of their daughter without consulting her, she was furious. And the poor child added fuel to the flame of her mother's wrath by imploring her, in a torrent of tears, to put a stop to the marriage.

Lady Hatton did all she could. For forcefulness of language, when roused, she was a pretty good second to the ex-Chief Justice of the King's Bench himself. She chose her words with more delicacy, but they were the more poignant for that. She pointed out to him all the things that a lady would be likely to point out to her husband on such an occasion, and she did not mince matters when it came to telling him what she thought of him. The main thing that emerged from the wreck of their home life was that he could not look to her for any further assistance, and that she would never consent to the marriage in spite of anything he might do.

Frances wept and wailed, and begged to be excused from marrying a man so distasteful to her as was Sir John Villiers.

It was a moving scene, but it did not move the ex-Chief Justice of the King's Bench. And whenever the subject was renewed the result was the same. The ladies wore themselves out in their efforts to wear out Sir Edward Coke, and they were simply wasting their time.

When Lady Hatton realized this she disappeared. And when she disappeared she took Frances with her.

They went one night after Sir Edward Coke had gone to bed—creeping downstairs and out of the house as silently as mice—to a spot where Lady Hatton had arranged for a coach

## *Lady Hatton counterplans*

to meet them and take them down to Oatlands, near Weybridge. In those days there was a royal palace at Oatlands, but it does not appear to have been to the palace they went, but to a mansion nearby belonging to my Lord of Argyle, and rented for the summer of 1617 by Sir Edmund Withipole, who was Lady Hatton's cousin.

It was not safe at that time for ladies to travel through the night insufficiently protected, and it is to be supposed that Lady Hatton had arranged an escort, the more particularly as they journeyed a long way round for fear of pursuit, and spent the night being bumped about over devious lanes and by-ways, till they arrived, weary and shaken, at dawn.

Sir Edmund and Lady Withipole received them kindly, and Lady Hatton had soon stormed her way into their sympathies with the story of Sir Edward Coke's fresh enormities. The upshot of it was that Sir Edmund Withipole said he would help her all he could. But the ladies must remain in strict seclusion for fear of being found. They were too near London and too near Stoke Poges for safety otherwise.

In strict seclusion, therefore, Lady Hatton spent her time, and this gave her leisure to meditate on her next move. It occurred to her that if she could marry Frances to someone else this would prove an effective bar to Sir John Villiers. It was not what she would have wished. Frances was really very young. But desperate deeds have to be countered by other deeds, and a husband chosen by herself would be better than one chosen by Sir Edward Coke. She thought of Henry de Vere, Earl of Oxford, whose father's first wife had been her aunt. He was the only child of a second wife so not really her first cousin. Frances did not appear to have taken any particular dislike to him ; in fact, with a little encouragement she thought Frances might like him very well.

But Frances had romantic notions about marrying for love,

## *The Lady of Bleeding Heart Yard*

and being chosen for herself alone, and her delicacy would have been shocked at giving her affection where it had not been sought. So something must be done, and, as time was an object, done quickly.

Lady Hatton set on foot negotiations with the Earl of Oxford, but it is to be feared that she led Frances to believe it was the other way round. And she did not show Frances the correspondence. After all, mothers do not always show their daughters of fifteen all the letters they write on their behalf. Frances could not expect it. It was enough for her to be told that this charming young stepcousin was a suitor for her hand.

Unfortunately the Earl of Oxford was at that time in Italy. Lady Hatton did not let this deter her, though it had its drawbacks, for there were no means of getting correspondence anywhere with expedition—no steam mail service, no air mail. That the young man would be delighted with the proposal when he received it Lady Hatton did not doubt for an instant, for he was somewhat impecunious, and if he married Frances he would receive, besides a wife of singular beauty and charm, two houses well furnished and an income of £3,000 to £4,000 a year, rising to £6,000. This was Lady Hatton's idea of marriage settlements and they were obviously on a much more liberal scale than those of Sir Edward Coke.

But she could not wait for the Earl of Oxford's reply, and maybe Frances had lingering doubts, for in order to encourage the prospective bride, Lady Hatton went so far as to anticipate my Lord of Oxford's delight in the matter, and wrote herself a letter purporting to come from him offering Frances his hand and heart in the most approved manner. The contents of this letter she conveyed to Frances, and so kept her tractable while she waited for his real reply. As this did not come quickly enough for the impatient lady she wrote out an

## *Frances Coke's obligation*

Obligation—that is what it is called in the records—for Frances to copy and sign and send to the Earl of Oxford, that he might be encouraged, by the willingness of the bride, to come home as soon as may be and lead her to the altar.

The Obligation is a masterpiece of prose of its kind :

I vow before God and take the Almyghtie to witnesse That I Frances Coke Yonger daughter to Sir Edward Coke late lord chiefe Justice of England doe gyve myselfe absolutely to Wyffe to Henry Vere Viscount Balboke Erle of Oxenford to whom I plyghte my trothe and inviolate vows to keepe myselfe till Death do us part : and if even I brake the leaste of these I pray God Damne mee Bodye and Soule in Hell fire in the world to come : and in theis world I humbly beseeche God the Erth maye open and swallow mee up quicke to the Terror of alle faythe brakere that remayne Alive. In witnesse whereof I have written alle theis with my owne hande and seald it with my owne seale which I will weare till youre retourne to mayke theis goode that I have sent You. And for further witnesse I here underneeth set to my Name.

FRANCES COKE

In the Presence of my deare Mother

July 10th 1617.

ELIZA HATTON.

V

THE COUNCIL TEMPORIZES

MEANWHILE SIR EDWARD COKE HAD BEEN BUSYING HIMSELF. There were ways whereby an ex-judge could find a runaway wife and daughter who were so near at hand. He then went to the Privy Council for a warrant to search the house at Oatlands rented by Sir Edmund Withipole.

King James I was in Scotland, and in his absence Sir Francis Bacon—who was then Lord Keeper—was only too pleased to refuse Sir Edward Coke his warrant. So the irate judge applied to Mr. Secretary Winwood.

Mr. Secretary Winwood disliked Sir Francis Bacon very heartily, and was glad to take the opposite side in a cause he was supporting. Accordingly he issued the search-warrant, but there was some question as to whether this was in order. Sir Edward Coke did not let any little irregularity of that sort trouble him, and having taken the precaution to arm himself, his attendants, and his sons by Bridget Paston, mounted on horseback one July day, and rode down post-haste to Oatlands.

When he got there he distinguished himself by making as much commotion as though he was His Majesty's Own Emissary—forced his way into the grounds by taking down the doors of the gatehouse—broke into the mansion through a window—and, accompanied by his sons and his attendants, searched every nook and corner.

It was some time before he found Lady Hatton and Frances. The noise he made had warned them of his arrival. Nor could they be mistaken as to the identity of this gang

## *Frances kidnapped*

of amateur housebreakers, for they could hear his well-known voice without, shouting in its most choleric tones :

“ If WE should kill any of your people it would be justifiable homicide but if YOU should kill any of us it would be murder.”

Lady Hatton and Frances did not wait for more. They ran away and hid. It is easy to guess with what palpitating hearts and anxious forebodings they did so, finding refuge in a little dark closet, where—hardly daring to breathe—they listened in an agony of suspense for sounds of the enemy’s approach.

They were found at last, clinging to each other. Sir Edward Coke treated them with scant courtesy. He dragged Frances out of the closet—she was by this time weeping bitterly—and there began a tussle of force between the parents which ended only when Lady Hatton was too exhausted to hold on any longer. Then without ceremony the ex-judge carried off his daughter, and she was mounted on horseback with one of her stepbrothers, and carried away under the eyes of her agonized mother.

Lady Hatton lost no time in considering what to do. She ordered her coach to be harnessed as rapidly as this could be done and followed in the wake of the party.

For some unaccountable reason her coach did not get very far. Whether it was really held up by mud in the middle of July is not now to be ascertained. Perhaps the coachman had his doubts about the expediency of coming too close to Sir Edward Coke in his present mood. Perhaps he had already been visited by him before his mistress gave him her orders. Anyway she had to give up the chase, and was left fretting and fuming in the roadway.

Sir Edward Coke arrived, therefore, without any undue pressure behind him at Stoke Poges, and conveying Frances



## *The Lady of Bleeding Heart Yard*

to an upper chamber, locked the door and put the key in his pocket.

It all happened more than three hundred years ago, and there is nothing now to tell whether the "upper chamber"—charged with the memory of all that past—is still standing or whether it was pulled down by Mr. Penn.

Sir Edward Coke did not keep his daughter long in confinement. He handed her over to Lady Compton and no doubt hoped that he had done with the affair.

But Lady Hatton had by no means done with it. As soon as she could get her coach going again she hurried to London. So impatient was she that she travelled too fast for the roads and the vehicle, with the result that the coach overturned with her ladyship in it. This caused some little delay, but it did not damp her resolution. She continued her journey to London as soon as she might, and went straight to the residence of Sir Francis Bacon—the Lord Keeper.

He was asleep in bed with orders not to be disturbed. The lady was ushered into a sitting-room next to his bedroom that she might be "the first to speak with him after he was stirring." But she had no patience to wait for him to stir, and unable to contain herself a moment longer "bounced against my Lord Keeper's door" and to his considerable alarm awoke him from his slumber.

There was commotion in an instant. My Lord Keeper shouted. His servants shouted. The lady shouted. And as soon as the door was opened Lady Hatton "thrust" into the room, and in a perfect tornado of words acquainted him with what had befallen her.

In the end she got what she wanted—a warrant from the Council signed by the Lord Keeper, the Lord Treasurer, and others, to bring her daughter from Sir Edward Coke and both of them before the Council.

### *3 score Men and Pistolls*

Then the Clerk of the Council went off with the warrant to Sir Edward Coke. But Lady Hatton could not wait for his return, and—determined not to be outdone by her husband in the matter of armed forces—set out to meet them accompanied by “3 score Men and Pistolls,” and taking with her in her very unreliable coach several of her friends, of whom Lord Houghton, Sir E. Lechbill, and Sir Robert Rich were three.

In the meanwhile Frances was between the Devil and the Deep Sea—if Sir Edward Coke and Lady Compton may be so described. Sir Edward Coke was never gentle at the best of times, and when forcing obedience was positively ferocious. Lady Compton’s methods on these occasions have not come to light, and it is best not to hazard a guess at them.

But that Frances was unhappy is not to be doubted. She was in an atmosphere of nightmare—all Villiers and Cokes—and all trying in their several ways by persuasion, threats, or punishment to make her marry a man she could not bear. She was very unhappy indeed. She outwept Niobe and felt like Iphigenia—for classical comparisons were much *à la mode*.

When the Clerk of the Council arrived with the warrant for her to be taken to London, she went in obedience to it—but she had to go with Lady Compton. There was also a Mrs. French in the coach with them, and they were accompanied by Clem Coke—known to the world at large as Sir Edward Coke’s “fightinge sonne.”

There was an agitating drive up—the rough highroads all ruts and pot-holes—the unwieldy, clumsy-wheeled coach, ornate and fantastic, lumbering through them, surrounded by horsemen. And somewhere on the way Lady Hatton, in her coach of another colour but equally ornate, equally fantastic,

## *The Lady of Bleeding Heart Yard*

and her threescore men and pistols, hoping to come up with Frances.

But the rival coach parties did not meet—which was just as well, for Lady Hatton vowed she would not rest till she had Frances again, and the damsel's escort swore to die rather than give her up. So the result of a *rencontre* might have led to still more serious trouble.

Things were bad enough as they were. My Lord Keeper summoned Sir Edward Coke to the Star Chamber to answer a charge of housebreaking. And Sir Edward Coke summoned Lady Hatton :

“ One : for conveying away her daughter clam et secrete.

“ Two : for endeavouring to bind her to my Lord Oxenford without the consent of her father.

“ Three : for counterfeiting a letter of my Lord Oxenford offering her marriage.

“ Four : for plotting to surprise her daughter and take her away by force to the breach of the King's peace and for that purpose assembling a body of desperate fellows whereof the consequences might have been dangerous.”

By the time everybody had arrived the Star Chamber presented an impressive scene. A suffused light as of a thousand gems shone from the stained-glass windows over panelled walls, richly carved in roses, pomegranates, port-cullises and fleurs-de-lis. The gorgeous robes of the Council blended with the no less colourful costumes of men and women assembled in a sea of ruffs. The names of many of them are familiar to us still. Howard—Cecil—Villiers—Knollys—Spenser—Neville—Noel—Herbert—Rich—and many more who by their presence created an atmosphere of moral support for one side or the other. Lady Compton sat

## *Lady Hatton before the Star Chamber*

surrounded by her family and Sir Edward Coke by his. Sir Francis Bacon was in his place as Lord Keeper.

Lady Hatton dominated them all. In spite of the brief held for her by the Lord Houghton—a most sound lawyer—she preferred to plead her own cause. And with such emphasis she did it that every breath set twinkling the jewels on her dress. She was as dramatic as a tragedy queen and as efficient as any lawyer who ever took silk.

Her clear, full voice rang out in the great chamber as she answered the charges :

“ One : I had cause to provide for her quiet—Secretary Winwood threatening she should be married from me in spite of my teeth ; and Sir Edward Cooke intending to bestow her against her liking ; whereupon she asked me for help. I placed her at my cousin german’s house a few days for her health and quiet.

“ Two : My daughter—tempted by her father’s threats and ill usage and pressing me to find a remedy—I did compassionate her condition and bethought of this contract with my Lord Oxenford if so she liked and therefore I gave it to her to peruse and consider by herself ; she liked it, cheerfully writ it out, with her own hand subscribed it, and returned it to me.

“ Three : The end justifies—excuses the fact ; for it was only to hold up my daughter’s mind to her own choice that she might with the more constancy endure her imprisonment—having this only antidote to resist the poison—no person or speech being admitted to her but such as spake Sir Iohn Villers’ language.

“ Four : Be it that I had some tall fellows assembled to such an end and that something was intended. Who intended this ? The mother. And wherefore ? Because she was

## *The Lady of Bleeding Heart Yard*

unnaturally and barbarously secluded from her daughter—and her daughter forced against her will contrary to her vows and liking to the will of him she disliked.”

She did not forget Sir Edward Coke's part in the piece. If she had taken away her daughter so had he. And if she had sought to bind her to my Lord of Oxford without her father's consent he had bound her to Sir John Villiers without her mother's. And as for the breach of the King's peace and the desperate fellows, what about Sir Edward Coke's "most notorious riot" at Oatlands and his threats of "justifiable homicide" ?

He did not get off scot-free. The Council—so he complained afterwards—gave him "hard measure," and "too much trampled on him with ill language." My Lord Keeper threatened Mr. Secretary Winwood with a *præmunire* for his part in the business, and there was no doubt that sympathy was with Lady Hatton and Frances. But in view of the King's attitude towards the proposed Villiers-Coke marriage, and the need for caution on the part of the Council in his absence, no more was done at that time than to allow Frances to return to her mother at Hatton House, while an Order was made that "the Lady Compton and her son should have access to win and wear her."

## VI

### *THE KING INTERVENES*

THOUGH KING JAMES I WAS IN SCOTLAND IT WAS NOT LONG before he knew all that was going on with regard to the proposed Villiers-Coke marriage. Both he and the Marquis of Buckingham—who was with him—were fairly snowed under by their correspondents.

Sir Edward Coke got in early with his version of the “most notorious riot” at Oatlands, but, far from laying himself open to a charge of housebreaking, he figured as the hero of the piece.

After my Wyfe Sir Edmund Withipole and the ladie his wyfe and their Confederates—to prevent the Match betwene Sir Iohn Villers and my doughter Frances—had conveyed awaye my dearest doughter out of my house and yn most secrete manner to a house neare Oatland wch Sir Edmund Withipole had tayken for the summer of my Lord Argyle—I—by God’s wonderful Providense finding where she was together with my Sonnes and ordinary Attendants did brake open twoe doores and recovered my doughter wch I did for these causes :—Fyrst and principally lest hys Majesty should thinke I was of confederacy with my Wyfe yn conveying Her awaye or charge Mee with want of government yn my Household yn suffering her to be carryed awaye after I had engaged myselfe to hys Majesty for the furtherance of theis Match. Second—for that I demanded my child of Sir Edmund Withipole and his Wyfe and they denyed to deliver her to Mee. And yet for theis Warrant ys given to sue mee yn his Majesty’s name yn the Star Chamber with all expedition wch tho’ I fear not well to defend yet yt will bee a grate vexation. But I have full cause to bring all the

## *The Lady of Bleeding Heart Yard*

Confederates ynto the Star Chamber for conveying awaye my child out of my house.

This pleased the Marquis of Buckingham, to whom it was written, and therefore the King, especially as the ex-Judge appended a long list of the riches and estates to which Frances was heir ; and it brought Sir Edward Coke a step up in the royal favour.

Sir Francis Bacon, on the other hand, for taking the opposite side, went a step down. He had omitted to ascertain to what extent the King and the Marquis of Buckingham were anxious to promote the marriage, and when he wrote offered them some gratuitous advice which was not well received. To the Marquis of Buckingham he said :

It seemeth that Secretary Winwood hath officiously busyed himselfe to make a Match betwene your Brother and Sir Edward Cooke's daughter and—as we heare—he does it more to make a faction then out of any grate affection for youre Lordshippe. It is trew hee hath the consent of Sir Edward Cooke as we heare uppon reasonable conditions for youre Brother and yet no better then withoutt question maye bee found in some other Matches.

But the Mother's Consent is not had nor the yong gentilwoman's who expecteth a grate Fortune from her Mother which withoutt her Consent is endangered. This Match out of my Fayth and Freedome to youre Lordshippe I hold very inconvenient both for youre Brother and Youre selfe.

First :— hee shall marry into a disgraced house which in Reason of State is never helde goode.

Next :— hee shall marry into a troubled house of Man and Wife which in Religion and Christian discretion is not liked.

Thirdly :—your Lordshippe will goe near to lose all such youre Friends as are adverse to Sir Edward Cooke—myselfe onely excepted who outt of a pure Love and

## *The King's letters*

Thankfulness shall be ever firm to you. And lastly believe it will gratefully distract the King's Service, . . . . .

Therefore my advice is that the Marriage be not pressed or proceeded in withoutt the Consent of both Parents and so brake it altogether.

He also wrote to the King, advising him against Mr. Secretary Winwood in the matter and making a dig or two at Sir Edward Coke, but offering his services to further the match if the King so desired. In fact, he wrote several times.

The replies to his letters were not what he expected. The Marquis of Buckingham was if anything a little too candid : " In this Bisynes of my Brother's that you overtrouble your selfe with I understand from London by some of my Friends that you have carryed your selfe with much Scorn and Neglect both towards my selfe and my Friends which if it prove trew I blame not you but my selfe."

King James I wrote equally to the point. Having in one letter told Sir Francis Bacon that to take sides with a wife against her husband was " to be in league with Delilah," and that " First to make an opposition—then to give advice by way of Friendship—is to make the plough go before the horse," the King flouted him in another letter : " Whereas you talk of the riot and violence committed by Sir Edward Coke we wonder you make no mention of the riot and violence of them that stole away his daughter which was the first ground of all that noise."

Sir Francis Bacon became alarmed at the turn things were taking and—being something of a weathercock—had no difficulty in veering round. He disclaimed any hint of disapproving of the marriage—had merely acted in good faith in not upholding housebreaking—and was ready to submit to the King's pleasure.



## *The Lady of Bleeding Heart Yard*

By the time King James I and the Marquis of Buckingham returned to London he had made a complete *volte-face*, but they found the other parties concerned in a great state of turmoil.

It does not appear that the Order to allow the Lady Compton and her son access to Lady Hatton's house to win and wear Frances was a success. The effort must have been somewhat in the nature of Penelope's web. Lady Hatton would undo by night what Lady Compton and Sir John Villiers did—or imagined they had done—by day. Not that they were able to do much. The distaste Frances felt for Sir John Villiers was genuine, and to have him coming day in and day out to force his attentions on her only made it worse. Nor can Lady Hatton be supposed to have been in the least conciliatory either. Indeed, she was in a most disagreeable position—Hatton House could scarcely have seemed her own with two such alien influences constantly in it—and she was quite likely to fly off at a tangent at any minute.

She may have been buoyed up, at first, with hopes of the Earl of Oxford, and no doubt encouraged Frances to be the same. The Earl of Oxford wrote that "he would come presently over and see her fair eyes and conclude the what he shall think fit for him to do." But it never got much further. Information was speedily forthcoming from the proper quarters that the King and the Marquis of Buckingham were determined to bring about a marriage between Sir John Villiers and the proposed bride of the Earl of Oxford, and that nobleman, deeming that it was a suitable moment for the exercise of discretion, hastily beat a retreat. He had no wish to embroil himself with either the King or the Cokes.

With the eclipse of the Earl of Oxford Lady Hatton once more found herself without "an antidote to resist the poison." And—as she had said before—"no person or speech being

## *The talk of the town*

admitted to Frances but such as spoke Sir John Villiers language," so that both mother and daughter began to feel as though a net were closing in on them from which there seemed to be no way out.

The whole town was talking about the matter. St. Paul's Cathedral—which was the rendezvous for all the gossips—was seething with interested parties—for everyone was interested—and buzzing with news and speculation. There was as much fuss about the business as though Frances had been the princess royal.

On July 19th Mr. John Chamberlain was writing to Sir Dudley Carleton : " It were a long story to tell all the passages of this busines, wch hath furnish'd Paul's, and theis Towne verie plentifulle the whole week."

And on July 22nd another correspondent was writing to tell him that

The Lord Chiefe Justice Sir Ed. Cooke hath payd 3500*£* for Composition for taking common Bayle for some accused of Pyracie wch hath bin urged agaynst him since his Fall. And perhaps fearynge more such Claps ; intending to stand out the Storme no longer privately hath agreed on a Match with Sir Iohn Villers for his yongest doughter Franche—the Mother's Darling—with wch the King was acquainted withall and writt to have it done before his coming backe. . . . . The caryadge of the Busines hath made such a stir in the Towne as never was. Nothing can fully represent it but a Commedye.

In the meantime Sir John Villiers and his mother persevered, the one with the winning and the other with the wearing, and the prospective bridegroom did his best to be as pleasant as he could. His personal appearance, too, came in for some attention the better to set off such advantages as he had. His narrow, pointed beard was neatly trimmed. Above his

## *The Lady of Bleeding Heart Yard*

smallish mouth his delicately-curved moustache was neatly clipped. His trunk hose and his doublet were very smart. He wore his hair long and curled over his ruff. He was rather tall than short, and though his face was melancholy it was by no means disagreeable.

But he could make no headway with Frances. He did not attract her, and his conversation bored her. If the future held nothing but Sir John Villiers what was there to live for ?

It was summer-time. Hatton Garden was at its loveliest. The roses were in full bloom. The strawberries—whole beds of luscious fruit—were ready for picking. Formal parterres and clipped hedges broke the grass sweeps and made a background for bowling-green and skittle-alley. In the shade of the house the pigeons preened, and from the sky overhead came the song of larks in the sunshine. Yet so changed is Hatton Garden now that only the sky remains the same.

But three hundred years ago—where now a maze of streets and buildings covers the ground and the sound of motor traffic fills the air—Sir John Villiers courted Frances Coke among rural sights and sounds, the lowing of cattle in the distance, and the crowing of cocks near at hand. He walked and talked with her in the great walled garden, but outside were fields and waterways, and coppices and farms. Holborn had a river at the bottom of the hill, with a bridge across it, and lanes on either side lined with steep-roofed tenements in long rows of gables and criss-cross timberwork—black and white and gaily coloured. There were mills for grinding corn—a church—a school—and not far off a prison—the Fleet.

On wet days they sat in the rooms of Hatton House—rooms full of beautiful Tudor things that Frances had known ever since she could remember anything—lovely things that have long since passed away and would be priceless if they had not.

## *The courtship continues*

There was the room in which Lady Hatton had married Edward Coke. Its windows were open now to let in the scent of flowers, and the great hearth was empty of all but andirons. There was the bedroom with the carved four-poster where Frances slept at night, and wept and prayed to be saved from Sir John Villiers. Everything was the same as she had always known it and yet everything seemed changed—as familiar things do seem to change at a time of crisis. It was as though she were looking into a mirror where objects had become distorted—even the most ordinary things.

The people whom she had always known—the King—the Queen—her father—her stepbrothers and stepsisters—had suddenly grown sinister and monstrous. How was it possible that they could want to take away all the romance from her life even before she had begun to find it? Was it really a curse to be a great heiress? Did money deny the liberty of choice?

Frances fought for the right to be happy. At fifteen we feel these things so deeply. An unromantic marriage is such a travesty of love. She could not go through with it. There is nothing to show that she ever cared for the Earl of Oxford, but she preferred her mother's choice for her to her father's. At least Henry de Vere was young, attractive and accomplished. She might have grown to love him. But what she wanted, really, was to be left alone to make her own choice, even if she did not choose for years to come.

To Lady Hatton the whole thing was the unfolding of a cruel chapter in the drama of her life. Her own future had been warped by a loveless marriage when she was not much older than Frances, and she would do all she could to save her daughter from the same fate.

So the arrangement the Council had made was not a success; and one way and another Sir John Villiers and his mother

## *The Lady of Bleeding Heart Yard*

did not feel that they were being given a fair chance. There was a good deal of commotion and some manœuvring, and then Frances was removed to the house of her stepbrother—Sir Robert Coke—who lived with his wife at Kingston Town's End. Thither Lady Hatton followed her, and spent the whole of every day, to prevent anybody else from worrying her. There is no need to enlarge on the friction there was likely to be, and the unpleasant position created for Frances. Whenever her mother's back was turned—and even when it was not—she was once again to be bullied, cajoled, persuaded, threatened. She was to cry herself to sleep at night and wake to more misery in the morning.

At this juncture Sir Francis Bacon, who was most anxious to reingratiate himself with the King and the Marquis of Buckingham, undertook to see what he could do with Lady Hatton. Though he was undoubtedly a turncoat he did not exactly desert her in her extremity. He merely changed his tactics. Instead of upholding her attitude towards the marriage, he brought all the power of his winning charm and eloquence and all the depth of his philosophy towards persuading her to change her mind.

He was sympathetic. He entered into her feelings almost as though he felt them himself. He agreed with all she had to say. But that done, he strongly and tactfully advised her, with the most friendly commiseration, to make the best of what must be. She could turn it to her own and to her daughter's advantage if she would but try. For she could do no good against the King—the Queen—and especially the Marquis of Buckingham. She would be for ever an outcast from Court—for ever parted from Frances. Of this he was as certain as that the marriage would take place. Let her be guided by him, and she would see that

## *Lady Hatton overruled*

everything would come right in the end. Anyway, it was no good fighting.

It was some time before Lady Hatton began to realize that much of what he said was true. She had no redress—absolutely none. King James I believed in the Divine Right of monarchs. The royal Prerogative was the key to his kingdom. He thought he could do as he liked, and there had been as yet no Civil War to prove him wrong. Nothing that Lady Hatton could say or do would prevent him carrying out his wishes—and if those wishes sacrificed Frances all the worse for her.

In the end Lady Hatton saw that it was so. She had been fighting against the inevitable. If she had thought something wonderful would happen to change the mind of the King, she now realized how unstable that thought had been. But if she must give way she intended to do so gracefully, and she intended to make her own terms—so far as she could—and they would exclude Sir Edward Coke.

She was very vexed indeed with Sir Edward Coke. There was he calling on the Queen—having private conferences with the King “as if he were already on his wings,” she had heard, while she was out of everything, still looked on with disfavour by Their Majesties and still forbidden to appear again at Court.

She began to capitulate. According to a letter she wrote to the King in 1618 she was even trying to supplant her husband in the proceedings. This is what she said she did, so it shall be given in her own words :

I call to witnesse my lord Houghton whom I sent twice to moove the matter to my Ladie Compton so as by mee she woulde take yt. Theis was after hee had so fondly broke off with my lord of Bokinghame when hee ruled youre Majestie's favoure scarce at the Salerie of a 1000 pounds. After that my Brother and Sister Burleigh

## *The Lady of Bleeding Heart Yard*

offered in the Galerie Chamber at Whytehall their Service unto my Ladie Compton to further theis Marage so as from mee shee would take it. Thirdly my selfe cominge from Kingstone in a Coach with my Ladie Compton I then offered her that if shee would leave Sir Edward Cooke I would proceed with her in theis Marage.

She might—and did—disbelieve in the Divine Right of monarchs. She might—and did—disapprove of forcing her daughter into a loveless marriage. Even so, as she could not fight the former or prevent the latter she must make the best terms she could. And then—just as she was beginning to do so—a curious thing happened. Without warning—suddenly—Lady Hatton was clapped into prison.

## VII

### *A WEDDING AT HAMPTON COURT*

FRANCES HAD NOT CONSENTED TO MARRY SIR JOHN VILLIERS, and in spite of her mother's reluctant capitulation she relied on her to see her through. And who could expect Lady Hatton to stand out against that? Sir Edward Coke and Sir Francis Bacon would not risk it. They were in agreement for once, and they acted in unison. Lady Hatton must be got away from Frances. She must be put where she could not come back until her return did not matter. She must go to prison.

Surely there was some ruse employed to persuade so astute a lady to put her neck into a noose, but the records have, so far, not divulged what it was. They only say that when Sir Edward Coke applied for the warrant Sir Francis Bacon issued it, and that Lady Hatton was arrested and lodged in the house of a Mr. Alderman Benett and there kept in close confinement. She was not an easy prisoner to manage, for she could not be expected to receive gracefully this reverse in her fortunes. She fretted and fumed and wore herself out protesting. But for the present she was pinioned and there was no chance of a flight. Yet she was not as much surprised to find herself imprisoned as might be supposed, because to be whisked off to gaol was one of those things that might have happened to almost anybody in the century in which she lived. And she was lucky that her place of confinement was an alderman's house. It might quite easily have been the Tower, the Gatehouse, or the Fleet.

With Lady Hatton safely out of the way Sir Edward Coke



## *The Lady of Bleeding Heart Yard*

turned his attention to Frances, and reminded her that his word was law. Frances had been brought up by her mother, however, and had seen her father flouted from her earliest years. She made a pretty good bid for liberty of action, and began by seeking to disarm her tormentors by her obvious wretchedness.

This was not successful. It was quite beyond her capacity to disarm them, and they were—or appeared to be—impervious to the sight of wretchedness. Her father called for reinforcements from among the sons and daughters of the late Bridget Paston, and the whole place—she was still with her stepbrother at Kingston—was buzzing with Villiers and teeming with Cokes. The removal of her mother from the situation had let in a veritable menagerie of chattering, expostulating people—all bent on conquering the will of a child not yet sixteen years of age.

They did not find it easy. Frances quarrelled and sulked with them by turns. She was of a high, vehement spirit, and she had her mother for a pattern. She tried—tried hard—to hold her own—stormed, wept, and pleaded. She repeated over and over again that she hated Sir John Villiers. It was waste of breath. Sir Edward Coke, finding that argument and persuasion were alike ineffectual, resorted at last to a very drastic method of bringing her to subjection. He had her whipped.

As she was “tied to the Bedposts and whipped ’till she consented to the Match,” there is some implication that this may have happened more than once. Thus her resistance ended. The sobbing girl—secured to the great four-poster—quivering under the lash as it fell again and again on her helpless limbs—her angry father towering above her thundering his ultimatum in her agonized ears—and finally the hopeless, helpless surrender.

## *A whipping at the bedpost*

Filial obedience was one of the tenets of the times. If Sir Edward Coke chose to punish his daughter that way he was within his rights. He had sent many a recalcitrant resister to the stocks, the pillory, the tumbrel, and the cage. He had stood over prisoners in the torture chamber—had watched them dragged through the streets at the cart's tail. What was a whipping at the bedpost compared with these? The cruelty never troubled him. Without it he would have thought the lash a farce.

He ordered the subdued Frances to write at his dictation a letter to her mother. It was couched in a somewhat different style from the letter she had written at her mother's dictation to the Earl of Oxford, but that was only to be expected. And Lady Hatton, when she received it, was in noways deceived. She knew only too well the turn of her husband's mind and his somewhat pompous phraseology. This is what Lady Hatton read :

Madam,

I must now humbly desire your patience in giving me leave to declare myself to you, which is, that without your allowance and liking, all the world shall never make me entangle or tie myself. But now, by my father's especial commandment, obey him in presenting to you my humble duty in a tedious letter, which is to know your Ladyship's pleasure, not as a thing I desire but I resolve to be wholly ruled by my father and yourself, knowing your judgements to be such that I may well rely upon, and hoping that conscience and the natural affection parents bear to children will let you do nothing but for my good, and that you may receive comfort, I being a mere child and not understanding the world nor what is good for myself. That which makes me a little give way to it is, that I hope it will be a means to procure a reconciliation between my father and your Ladyship. Also I think it will be a means of the King's favour to my father. Himself is not to be misliked ; his fortune is very good, a gentleman well born. . . . So

## *The Lady of Bleeding Heart Yard*

I humbly take my leave, praying that all things may be to every one's contentment.

Your Ladyship's most obedient  
and humble daughter for ever

FRANCES COKE.

Dear mother, believe there has no violent means been used to me by words or deeds.

While Lady Hatton was digesting this at Mr. Alderman Benett's, Sir Edward Coke was drawing up plans for the wedding. The King himself superintended the preparation of the marriage settlements "that both father and mother," says Lord Campbell in his *Lives of the Chief Justices*, "might be compelled to do justice to Sir John Villiers and his bride." (It is from the same source that the letter of Frances Coke to her mother has been taken, but it is obvious that Lord Campbell has not copied the young lady's spelling.)

When it came to the final negotiations Sir Edward Coke found himself obliged to pay up more than he had intended, but the King could not be denied, and he was obliged to put as good a face on it as he knew how.

The wedding was fixed for Michaelmas Day, 1617. And so pleased was the King with his own part in the business that he arranged for the ceremony to be performed in the Chapel of Hampton Court Palace in the presence of the whole Court, and gave orders that the festivities were to be carried out on a very grand scale.

Lady Hatton was not released, and she remained the unwilling guest of Mr. Alderman Benett during the whole time the preparations were in progress. Everyone knew her ladyship too well to take any risks. Mother and daughter had disappeared together before and might well contrive to disappear together again. Last time they had not gone far ; but there was always Corfe Castle, and if once Lady Hatton

## *The wedding day*

had got Frances there no weapon of warfare known in the reign of James I would ever have got them out. Corfe Castle was invulnerable. The Purbeck estate on which it stood was self-supporting, and with proper commissariat arrangements they could have defied their persecutors indefinitely. It did not come to this. Lady Hatton was too securely confined and Frances too closely watched. Nothing happened, in fact, to upset the plans of Sir Edward Coke, and the wedding arrangements went forward at a brisk pace.

They did not interest Frances. She passed the last few weeks of her girlhood miserable and subdued, waiting for a miracle to happen that would release her from Sir John Villiers. And when at last her wedding-day arrived she looked more like a martyr being brought to the stake than a bride being led to the altar.

On that day in late September, when the first breath of autumn quivered in the air and the trees were turning brown and gold about them, the wedding party started from Sir Robert Coke's house at Kingston Town's End, and travelled to Hampton Court. From the great entrance gates of the Palace they could be seen coming on the Kingston Road—a procession of nine coaches with very long bodies and very large wheels all brightly painted, and carrying the whole of the Coke family and what friends they could muster to witness the ceremony.

They found the Palace magnificently prepared. The King had done his part to honour his Favourite. The press of people was all they could have wished. They could hardly move in the corridors. There was the customary deadlock on the stairs. As the bridal group with Sir Edward Coke and the reluctant Frances entered the chapel, what little space was left for them to move in closed rapidly behind them—and she was a prisoner in the very House of God itself.

## *The Lady of Bleeding Heart Yard*

If you go to Hampton Court Palace and stand where Frances Coke stood so long ago, you will, perhaps, think of her with the sympathy of which she had so little when she lived—and maybe you will not blame her too hardly for what came after. For to her the marriage was a travesty and a sham—a sacrificial ceremony rather than one of holy union. She was not in love. She was disillusioned. She felt betrayed by those who should have been the first to guard her ; and for the time at any rate her faith in people was shaken. She was little more than a child, and had as yet no armour either of philosophy or worldliness to shield her.

It is not to be taken as a fault of philosophy that one of the greatest of philosophers should have helped to bring her to this crisis in her life, because Sir Francis Bacon, when put to the test, found—as most of us do find—that it is easier to preach wisdom than to practise it.

The Bishop of Winchester performed the nuptial ceremony. The King gave the bride away in the presence of the Queen and of that Prince, who, when he became King Charles I, was to prove that the Divine Right of monarchs existed only in the imagination of the Stuart Clan.

There is a contemporary account of the wedding of Frances Coke and Sir John Villiers from the pen of Sir Gerard Herbert, writing to Sir Dudley Carleton :

Maie yt please yor Lordshippe,

... I know not any news to write yor. Lo : other than the marriage of Sir Iohn Villers wth my Lord Coke's yongest doughter, on Monday last, beyng Michailmas day at Hampton Courte when King Quene and Prince were present in the chappell to see them marryed. My Lord Coke gave his doughter to the Kynge (wth some words of complement at the givinge). The Kynge gave her Sir Iohn Villers. The Prince sate with her to grand dynner and supper so to manie Lordes and Ladies, my Lord



KING JAMES I

By Vansomer, 1620 (?) from Hampton Court Palace

*By gracious permission of His Majesty the King*



## *The King has a merry night*

Canterbury, my Lord Treasurer, my Lord Chamberlayne, etc. The Kynge dynner and supper dronke healthe to the Bride, the Bridegroom stood behinde the Bride : the dynner and supper. The Bride and Bridegroom lay next day a bedd till past 12 a clocke, for the Kynge sent worde he wold come to see them, therefore wold they not rise. My Lord Coke looked with a merrie Countenance and sate at the dynner and supper, but my Ladie Hatton was not at the weddinge, but is still at Alderman Bennettes prisonere. The Kynge sent for her to the weddinge, but desired to be excused, sayinge she was sicke. My Lord of Bukingham, mother, brethren, their sonnes and his sisters weare throughout day at Courte, my Lord Coke's sonnes and their sonnes, but I saw never a Cecill. The Sonday my Lord Coke was restored to his place of counsellor as befor. . . .

Yo : Lo : in all service to commande

GERARD HERBERT.

*London theis 6 Oct.*

In the evening a masque was performed, and there was the usual scramble at the banquet that followed, though more among the lesser lights than at the bridal table. King James I, having drunk the health of bride and bridegroom rather more often than was good for him, made an all night jollification of the occasion, and instead of going to bed prowled round the Palace in his shirt and night clothes, indulging in clownish tricks, such as barging into bedrooms, making "apple pie" beds for the occupants, casting off the bride's left stocking, teasing her with much mirth and ribaldry, and performing "other petty sorceries."

It is a wonder he felt no alarm at disturbing the Hampton Court ghosts, for he was of a nervous, apprehensive disposition, and the Hampton Court ghosts are many. There is Queen Anne Boleyn—second wife of King Harry VIII—who may have been absent, for she has so many haunts it is never



## *The Lady of Bleeding Heart Yard*

quite certain where she will be found. And Queen Jane Seymour—the same King's third—whose unquiet conscience keeps her on the move where once she supplanted her mistress in the heart of the royal bluebeard. And Queen Katherine Howard—his fifth—who runs shrieking and distraught down the long gallery from the chapel entrance to the rooms that were hers. And there is Mrs. Penn, nurse to King Edward VI, who lived so long at the Palace that even in death she lives there still. Perhaps King James knew there was no need to worry about them, for the unseemly sight of the King of England, Scotland and Wales, playing the buffoon about his Palace in his night-shirt was enough to "lay" all the ghosts in it.

He visited the bride and bridegroom, and next day assisted at their *réveille*, peeping inside the curtains, jumping and rolling on the great four-post bed, and making a most unkingly display of the royal prerogative.

Lady Hatton heard of his sprightliness afterwards, but she was not there to see it, for she was still at Mr. Alderman Benett's. As a prisoner on parole she might have attended the wedding as the King's guest ; but she would not be a party to such a scene, and she pleaded illness as an excuse for not obeying the royal command. She may well have been ill. There was enough to make her so. That Michaelmas Day was probably the most unhappy she had ever passed. All the hopes and aspirations of sixteen years had been shattered in that one brief ceremony at the bidding of another—and that other an upstart, newly-raised favourite, scarcely more than a boy. If she felt angry and embittered at the injustice of kings, and at the selfish cruelty of the father of her child, it is scarcely to be wondered at—and it is scarcely surprising if she planned to "get her own back."

There she was in her chamber at Mr. Alderman Benett's

## *Lady Hatton still captive*

on her daughter's wedding-day, pacing the floor with agitated steps or sitting in gloomy silence meditating revenge—but most likely keeping to her bed and following in imagination every single thing that she thought would be happening to Frances. Perhaps her relations were allowed to visit her, to encourage, condole, or expostulate according to their several ways—for there were no Cecils at Hampton Court, and she might have been glad to hold a reception of them in her confinement.

However it may have been, the day passed, to be followed by other days, and still Lady Hatton remained a prisoner. Then it occurred to the Marquis of Buckingham and to the King that, having got all they could out of Sir Edward Coke for Sir John Villiers, it might be as well to see what they could get out of Lady Hatton.

They waited a little for fear of appearing too precipitate, and then the lady was remanded in custody to the house of Sir William Craven as a preliminary to her release. She was comfortable enough in her new quarters, for Sir William Craven was a wealthy alderman with a fine town house, who knew to a nicety how to honour so distinguished and stately a prisoner. He became Lord Mayor of London in the following year—1618—and was father of the first Earl of Craven—that Earl of Craven who so chivalrously followed the fortunes of King James I's eldest and only surviving daughter, Elizabeth, Queen of Bohemia. Incidentally, Lady Hatton was a friend of the Queen of Bohemia also, and she knew the future Earl of Craven quite well—he was only a child at the time—so her enforced lodgings might have been worse.

Lady Hatton was beginning to accept the inevitable. The marriage was an accomplished fact and not easily, or with credit, to be set aside—for divorce was difficult when James I

## *The Lady of Bleeding Heart Yard*

was king, and any other form of annulment equally so. Therefore, if Lady Hatton did not make a graceful submission, she was liable to remain permanently a prisoner. While she was considering the momentous question of pocketing her pride, the King and the Marquis of Buckingham were planning her release. So when at last she had schooled herself to the point of writing a letter of obedience to the King, James I received it with alacrity, and was only too pleased to "give her all the contentment and countenance" he could.

He even sent the Marquis of Buckingham and some others to fetch her from Sir William Craven's house—not indeed as a penitent and a prisoner—Lady Hatton would not conform to that—but in twelve coaches and with all the pomp and ceremony of a diplomatic function, which, of course, in some measure it was. She was accordingly escorted to the King, who was awaiting her at Exeter House, where she was warmly welcomed by her family. Frances was there too. There had been some degree of feeling on the part of Frances because her mother—however reluctantly—had gone over to the enemy. And King James—with what were considered appropriate words to Lady Hatton—"reconciled her to her daughter" and regarded any further unpleasantness as at an end.

That night Lady Hatton gave a splendid party at Hatton House to celebrate her return. The King, the Queen, the Prince, and other illustrious guests honoured her with their presence at dinner. The King was so pleased at getting his own way with the redoubtable lady that he was amiability itself. He chatted and laughed with mother and daughter as they stood behind his chair while he dined. He knighted four of Lady Hatton's friends to please her, and in the exuberance of his spirits he gave her half a dozen kisses. She could

## *Lady Hatton celebrates her release*

have dispensed with these, for the King's kisses could not have been pleasing, but she took them in good part. Indeed, "His Majesty was never merrier nor more satisfied, who had not patience to sit a quarter of an hour without drinking the health of my Ladie Elizabeth Hatton, which was first pledged by my Lord Keeper [Bacon] and my Lord Marquis Hamilton, and then by all the lords and ladies with great gravity and respect, and then by all the gallants in the next room."<sup>1</sup>

Sir Edward Coke was not there. He dined in peace at the Temple, having heard that his lady had given strict instructions that neither he nor anyone belonging to him was to be allowed to cross her threshold. As he disliked parties, and disapproved of all social froth as waste of time, this was no hardship. So Lady Hatton could enjoy herself without being reminded by his presence of the gloom he had thrown on her. She was once more in her element—drowning her troubles in light and life and laughter—seeking to forget in social scenes not only the skeleton in her domestic cupboard but that new skeleton which had come to join it—the gaunt spectre of her daughter's infelicity.

For the moment, at any rate, she allowed herself to be merry. Back at Hatton House, free from restraint, with Frances her own again, and with the royal family around her as in old days, she was thoroughly enjoying the contrast with what had gone before, and the relief to her feelings after all she had suffered. When she went to rest that night in her own great bed in her own familiar room, with all the sights and sounds around her she knew so well, small wonder was it if she determined that she would risk losing them no more. She had been made to submit to the royal prerogative, but she was a lady of much resourcefulness and she would see to

<sup>1</sup> SPEDDING, "*Life and Times of Francis Bacon*," vol. ii, p. 281.

## *The Lady of Bleeding Heart Yard*

it that the King gained nothing by his privilege, if gain to the Villiers family was what he had in view.

She dismissed Sir Edward Coke from her thoughts as sweepingly as she had dismissed him from her house. She would never forgive him for his part in this marriage matter. Let him reap the tares he had sown. He would get no help from her. He had sacrificed Frances. She would give her devotion to Frances a hundredfold, for she was sure she would need it.

## VIII

### *LADY HATTON RESUMES CONTROL*

IT WAS NOT LONG BEFORE LADY HATTON HAD REGAINED ALL her old place at Court. The King and Queen were really glad to have her back. She was so eminently able to relieve tedium. And now that there were no interests to clash she became once more Queen Anne of Denmark's dearest Eliza.

The Villiers family hastened to appear as amiable as they could—for quite different reasons. So anxious were they to show her respect that the Lady Compton "made a great feast to the Lady Hatton," which her ladyship honoured by her presence. There was, in fact, much apparent friendliness on both sides. Nevertheless, Lady Hatton laboured under no illusion. She chose for the moment to accept these advances without burrowing beneath them, but she was not in the least deceived by a civility of which she well knew the worth. She wanted Frances. That was the mainspring of her actions. And she did not wish to make things more difficult for Frances by quarrelling with her husband's people. The Villiers family must be tolerated for her sake. Besides, what could give Lady Hatton greater pleasure than to see the Marquis of Buckingham and his relations tumbling over each other in their efforts to conciliate her—especially as she had no intention of satisfying their greedy self-interest.

The effect of so much favour soon brought the usual crowd of "place" hunters round Lady Hatton, and she was begged to intercede for first one and then another with the King, the

## *The Lady of Bleeding Heart Yard*

Queen, and even with the Marquis of Buckingham. She good-naturedly did what she could, but her main interest in this direction lay in showing some recognition of the services that had been rendered to herself by those friends who had stood by her when she was in trouble. Of these the Lord Houghton, Sir Robert Rich, and Sir Dudley Carleton were foremost.

The Lord Houghton's zeal in her cause was unflagging—as much, perhaps, because he and Sir Edward Coke could “no wayes endure each other”—as because he was anxious to help her for her own sake. She spoke for him with both the King and Queen and brought him all the assistance she could.

Sir Robert Rich as her stepson-in-law had also upheld her in her troubles. His wife had done the same. Lady Rich became the mother of seven children and did not live very long after they were born. She died early enough for her husband to marry twice more before his death in 1658.

Lady Hatton's other friend, Sir Dudley Carleton, was on his way to considerable renown. He was always sympathetic with ladies who might be in any sort of distress, and spent much of his life in sympathizing with the daughter of King James I, Elizabeth, Queen of Bohemia—which was a very expensive thing to do. Sir Dudley Carleton has become famous as the recipient of a great many interesting letters during the reigns of James I and Charles I. He had adopted a diplomatic career. And as Mr. Secretary Winwood—Sir Ralph Winwood—died soon after Lady Hatton's return to Court, it was suggested that she should bring forward Sir Dudley Carleton for the post of Secretary of State. This she promised to do. But her kind efforts on his behalf hardly appear to have met with the appreciation from his wife that might have been expected. To tell the truth Lady Carleton

## *Lady Hatton and Sir Dudley Carleton*

seems so little to have shared her husband's sympathy for the troubled lady that they had a quarrel about it.

Hoping no doubt that Lady Hatton might make some amends to him for his domestic tribulation Sir Dudley Carleton hastened to acquaint her of the difficulties into which he had got himself on her behalf. He wrote. She replied—though hardly as he could have hoped :

My Lorde,

I understande by youre Letter the Quarrell of unkindness betwene yorselke and youre Wife but havinge considered the Cause of the Difference to proceed onelie from yor : lovinge respect shewne towards Mee I hope that my thankfull acknowledgements will bee sufficient reconcilment to give you both proceedings for the continuence of youre wonted good Will and Affection . . . even tho' I understand by youre Letter you thinke Women to bee capable of little else but Compliments.

Wherefore to express a Gracious Courtesie for yor : kindness as yn the few Wordes I am willinge to utter you maye assure yourselve yt my desier ys to remayne.

Your assured lovinge Frend,

ELIZA HATTON

Hatton House

20th March 1618.

What could Sir Dudley Carleton do with that to repair the breach ?

He did not become Secretary of State for some years. Instead he was sent on various Embassies abroad. In the reign of Charles I he was created Lord Dorchester.

Neither did Sir Edward Coke receive the judgeship he coveted. He still occupied a seat at the Council Table, and with that the King and the Marquis of Buckingham expected him to be content. But he was far from being content. Mortified and chagrined he spent most of his time at Stoke



## *The Lady of Bleeding Heart Yard*

Poges writing the law he was debarred from administering. There were one or two attempts to reconcile him to his lady, but she was obdurate. And she was none too pleased with Mr. Secretary Winwood, who, before he died, assured her brother that "for all her bitter speeches they two [she and Sir Edward Coke] should become good friends again."

She speedily put an end to any hopes in that direction by declaring she "would sooner be friends with the devil."

She was feeling harassed by a cloud of a very different kind. A gloom hung over the Court, which quite damped its recent brightness. The Queen's health had begun to fail. The air of Oatlands, of London, and of Theobalds was tried in turn, but nothing served. The Queen had dropsy, phthisis, liver trouble, and gout—a formidable combination of ills. By the end of 1618 she was an invalid.

Lady Hatton went to comfort her as best she could; and away from Court tried to make things merry for others. In January, 1619 she gave a grand supper and play at Hatton House, the ostensible reason for which was to bring together the Lady Diana Cecil and the Marquis of Buckingham, because King James I had expressed a wish that the Favourite should marry. But Lady Hatton was not very successful when she assumed the role of matchmaker, and in spite of the honour she proposed to confer on the Marquis of Buckingham in selecting for his wife a lady of her own family, nothing came of her efforts. The Lady Diana Cecil—who was her niece and a beautiful girl—frustrated her plans by marrying the young man Lady Hatton had originally intended for Frances—Henry de Vere, Earl of Oxford—so that what one cousin lost the other gained. And as it was not long before Lady Hatton and the Villiers family had fallen out again, it was perhaps as well that the Lady Diana Cecil was saved from having to take sides in the matter. The Marquis of Buckingham was no



QUEEN ANNE OF DENMARK  
From Hampton Court Palace  
*By gracious permission of His Majesty the King*



## *The Queen dies*

doubt glad to avoid what might well have proved to be a hornet's nest of Cecils, with Lady Hatton as his aunt-in-law at their head.

Her mind was soon back again with the Queen. In February Anne of Denmark took to her favourite bed at Hampton Court and became rapidly worse. The King was also ill, though he visited his consort as often and for as long as he was able. But the shadow of sickness hovered over the royal pair in all its gloom, and there were anxious forebodings. Gone were the gaieties and merry moments of Anne of Denmark's Court. The true-hearted, self-willed, pleasure-loving Queen—always profuse—always in debt—always difficult—but withal kind and affectionate—would never lead the revels again. In March she died; and Hampton Court, which in a way seems her best and proper setting, was the scene of her going. It is a place of memories, and among them she is not forgotten. Her death added yet another superstition to the many that haunt the Palace, for it is said that the great clock struck the hour just as she passed away, and having struck, it stopped. And this made such an impression on its works that ever since, whenever there has been the death of a resident in the Palace, it has not failed to stop again.

Lady Hatton followed the funeral rites with grief. The Queen was embalmed, and then taken by barge to Somerset House, where she remained in state for more than two months. Everyone visited her there to take a last farewell. King James I went to the races to shake off the depression of so much mourning, though he considered it decorous to wear black until after the funeral, and then "a suit of watchet satin, laid with blue and white feathers"—very gay—as some token of the Resurrection.

The burial ceremony was fixed for May 13th. The Queen

## *The Lady of Bleeding Heart Yard*

was to be laid in Westminster Abbey. Lady Hatton was one of the ladies who was bidden to attend.

With due solemnity she drove to Somerset House, her coach, her horses, her menservants, and her gentlewomen all heavily draped in black. From Somerset House the mourners went on foot; and the long train of lords and ladies who followed the Queen arrived at the Abbey as tired as they might be expected to be after walking all that way in the ponderous garments they had been commanded to assume—sixteen yards of black broadcloth for countesses and twelve for other ladies—and as they could hardly put one foot before the other to carry so much material unaided they were each allowed a cavalier or two to assist them on the route. Prince Charles and the Archbishop of Canterbury went first, then the corpse surmounted by the Queen's effigy, drawn by six black horses lugubriously arrayed, then the horsemen and banners, and lastly the long, drawling, hobbling procession, filing past the bystanders and the people mounted on scaffolds to get a better view.

The scene at the Abbey was equally depressing. What with the crowd and the broadcloth there was scarcely room to move. And the unfortunate ladies were so fatigued they could barely hold up through the long service. To those who, like Lady Hatton, added sorrow at the loss of a friend to the discomfort of her obsequies, time left a memory as oppressive as the occasion had been dismal.

When all was over and the mourners gone, the hearse was left standing over the grave in the Abbey where the Queen had been buried. And there it remained until the Parliament men came to destroy it a quarter of a century later. King James I—though he had been the most indulgent of husbands while she lived—gave her no other monument. Instead he composed an epitaph in verse which did very

## *The Villiers family again*

well, and he sent for all her valuables to be brought to him at Greenwich.

It fell to Sir Edward Coke and to the late Queen's auditor to see that her chests and cupboards were properly inventoried, and then despatched to the royal widower. The goods filled four carts. It was not the sort of work Sir Edward Coke would have chosen in preference to judicial duties, but he performed it with his usual precision.

In the meantime the Villiers family were getting restive under the yoke of being polite to Lady Hatton for nothing. The Queen had scarcely been buried a fortnight when the Marquis of Buckingham and his mother importuned the King to bring pressure to bear upon the determined lady to part with some of her property for the benefit of Sir John Villiers. It appeared to the Marquis of Buckingham and his mother that Corfe Castle and the whole of the Isle of Purbeck would be suitable provision for Lady Hatton's son-in-law, and the least she could do would be to put him in possession at once. It was therefore most trying that Lady Hatton made no effort to fall in with their wishes, for, though her husband held her property and did what he chose with the rents, he could not prevent her from settling it on Frances and Sir John Villiers if so she liked.

She did not like ; and neither the King nor anyone else could undermine her resolution. She would not clip her wings too fine. Wealth was power even if she could not handle it herself, and judiciously dangled before the eyes of the Court favourite could even be made to yield his restive homage. Despoiled he would flout her. She would be neither despoiled nor flouted.

Then the bait which never failed to tempt the Villiers family was held out to her. The Marquis of Buckingham suggested that if she were created Countess of Purbeck she

## *The Lady of Bleeding Heart Yard*

might be induced in exchange to yield up Corfe Castle and the Isle of Purbeck to Sir John Villiers. He was judging her by his own mother, who had accepted with the utmost complaisance the title of Countess of Buckingham, which had been conferred on her in 1618 for no other reason than because she was the Favourite's mother.

He should have known Lady Hatton better. The prospect of sharing any honour with the Countess of Buckingham was enough to make her want to do without it. She instantly made it clear that she thought more of her dead husband's title than of any new one that would make her a countess, and she valued her estates more than she did an empty name.

But the Marquis of Buckingham would not leave her alone. Urged on by his mother he still propounded the advantages of the plan in spite of Lady Hatton's side of it sounding a little thin. It is a not uncommon failing to think other people unreasonable when they refuse to grant the best of a bargain. The Marquis of Buckingham certainly thought Lady Hatton unreasonable. But as the title of Purbeck did not appeal to her she was graciously offered—for a consideration—that of Westmorland instead. This proved to be even less acceptable, whereupon a coolness developed between the parties and Lady Hatton dropped rapidly from favour.

The Marquis of Buckingham complained to the King, who, to please him, was constrained to turn Sir John Villiers into the Viscount Purbeck on the mere expectation of the goodwill of that gentleman's mother-in-law—for to anything connected with the Isle of Purbeck that was his only claim. Indeed, the new Viscount Purbeck was without land, wealth, or any striking ability to warrant his elevation, and this did not pass unnoticed by the people, whose growling criticism and discontent might have sounded a note of warning to a king

## *The King to the rescue*

less sure of his Divine Right. It did not trouble James Stuart. Nor did it trouble the new Viscount Purbeck. In the next year—1620—he is described as being “run mad with pride.”

He had been getting on none too well with Lady Hatton. She rather blamed Sir Edward Coke for this.

“I find,” said she to the King, “how desirous he is to rub up anything to make ill blood betwixt my son Villiers and myself.”

And apart from the trouble she was having with her son-in-law and his family, there was the Bishop of Ely trying to undermine her from Hatton House, and there was Sir Edward Coke withholding from her the whole of her hard-earned allowance, and leaving her with nothing. She complained bitterly to the King about it all, and to calm her His Majesty upheld her against the Bishop—he had in mind no doubt some future benefit thereby to the Viscount Purbeck—and wrote instructing the Council to right her wrongs with Sir Edward Coke :

Right Trusted and welbeloved Counsellors and Cousins Wee hereby commend to your Care this particular heereinlosed and yt you call Sir Edward Coke thereto : and see those . . . ordered and agreed Foorth wth that Wee may be both satisfied of suche things he promised unto us upon the Marriadge of Sir Iohn Villers and his Daughter. And yt the Ladie Hatton be not looser [loser] either in her present estate or Fortune for her obedience to our Commandment in signeing to Sir Robert Riche and Sir Christopher Hatton For wch we hold our selves in honor to see her righted according to our P'ces [Promises] written to the whole Cooude [Court] out of Scotland. For the more speedie exerting of those things our will and pleasure is yt you call to assist you heerein any suche of our Learned Counsayle you shall think fitt.<sup>1</sup>

Sir Christopher Hatton—godson of the Lord Chancellor—

<sup>1</sup> *ADD. MS.* 34727, f. 37. *Letter from James I to Council, 1617-19.*



## *The Lady of Bleeding Heart Yard*

died in 1619. Lady Hatton had not been too pleased with him for entering into an agreement with Sir Edward Coke about his godfather's Bond, but had eventually forgiven him. She did not find it so easy, however, to forgive Sir Edward Coke for his share in the matter. He was trying to win his way back to royal favour. He was needed in the Star Chamber and missed from the Exchequer Chamber. Whenever an important case came up for handling, or when the Lord Chancellor was ill, he was called upon to give his assistance. At one time business was suspended because he was indisposed. At another, he arrived in his nightcap when he was wanted, and complained that he was "ambulent and not current," as he proceeded to attend to the work of the day.

All his efforts to re-establish himself were promptly frustrated either by Sir Francis Bacon or Lady Hatton. Even his nightcap was less undignified than the figure his wife presently caused him to cut before the august tribunal of which he was a leading light. She was never at a loss to discover his enormities and made him lay bare his matrimonial shortcomings when answering the charges she preferred against him.

He certainly laid himself open to trouble by the way he treated her property. Though he was willing they should live apart he could not bring himself to forget that in law husband and wife were one, and that he had the right to hold her property in his keeping. And this he continued to do to the no little dissension between them. From the date when Frances was married he even chose to leave her destitute, considering that as she now had no children dependent on her she could fend for herself as best she could. Lady Hatton was obliged to sell her jewellery and other belongings, and even some of her land in order to meet her obligations; and to make matters worse for her she was constrained to buy Sir Edward Coke's consent to the sale, a married woman having

## *More matrimonial trouble*

no right in law to dispose of her estate without the permission and concurrence of her husband. This was sufficiently galling, but it was made a thousand times worse by having to pay the author of her wrongs for consent to sell what belonged to her that she might have the bare means to live, for from him she had nothing at all. Small wonder that she called him before the Council Table to account for his conduct.

Armed with the King's authority she explained matters to the Council : " And whereas he accuseth me of calling him base and treacherous fellow ; the words I cannot deny, but when the cause is known I hope a little passion may be excused. Neither do I think it will be thought fit that, although he have five sons to maintain (as he alledgeth) a wife should therefore be thought unfit to have maintenance according to her birth and fortune."

The Council agreed with her. She prevailed exceedingly. But it made no difference to Sir Edward Coke. He was as obstinate as he was dictatorial, and persisted in clinging to the letter of the law. He soon found himself out of favour and back again at Stoke Poges with his law writings for company.

Posterity has chosen to uphold him and to blame his wife, for the sole reason that he was a truly able judge and a great advocate for the betterment of the laws of England ; and it is easier to think well of such a man than to think ill. But in his personal relationships he was a disagreeable autocrat, petrified in pride, and not to be moved from a decision. To Lady Hatton, perhaps, posterity counted for little. She had the sympathy of people while she lived, which, after all, is the only sort of sympathy that matters.

So she relegated Sir Edward Coke to his study at Stoke Poges, and turned her attention to her son-in-law. She tried to be pleasant to the Viscount Purbeck but his stupidity

## *The Lady of Bleeding Heart Yard*

exasperated her. A place had been found for him as Master of the Robes to Prince Charles. He resigned this in January, 1620 to become instead Master of the Horse. When the Queen died the household of the Prince moved to Denmark House, which had been her residence, and Lord and Lady Purbeck went to live there. Denmark House was only another name for Somerset House and was so called in compliment to the Queen.

It was a great house on the south side of the Strand with gardens to the Thames, and spreading trees which made some parts of it rather dank. There were statues and terraces and fountains, and dark stone stairs which wound down to the watergate over the river. There was a courtway from the Strand, and the whole front of the building faced the thoroughfare, with many windows of tinted glass which threw a kaleidoscope of colour into the stately rooms. There were a large court and other courts, a fine hall and handsome staircases, and numerous apartments for the Prince's household as well as for the Prince himself, besides rooms of state for great occasions.

In the constant bustle of the Prince's Court the Viscount and Viscountess Purbeck had their home, and it was not long before the Viscountess Purbeck became the centre of attraction there. She was about the same age as the Prince—perhaps a little younger—but they were not in the least alike in disposition, and do not seem to have felt for each other any great degree of friendship. As for the Viscount Purbeck, he hardly counted either way, but it is only fair to say that so far as he could he exercised a steadier influence in the house of the Prince than did his brother at the Court of King James. Sir Anthony Weldon has put on record how things were, and thus describes the brothers: "What got him [the Marquis of Buckingham] most hatred to raise brothers and brothers-in-law

*“Lugging the sow by the ear”*

to the highest ranks of nobility, which were not capable of the place of scarce a justice of the peace ; only his brother Purbeck had more wit and honesty than all the kindred beside, and did keep him in some bounds of honesty and modesty, whilst he lived about him, and woulde speake plaine Englishe to him.”

It does not appear that the Viscount Purbeck’s efforts in the matter of plain English did his brother much good, for after the death of the Queen and the removal of the Prince’s household to Denmark House the King and the Favourite gave full rein to their dissolute habits. They surrounded themselves with friends as dissipated as they were, and—to quote Sir Anthony Weldon again—the Marquis of Buckingham chose only “such as humoured him in his unchaste pleasures ; so that since his first being a pretty harmless, affable gentleman he grew insolent, cruel, and a monster not to be endured.”

During the lifetime of the Queen he had had the tact to remain friendly with her, and had even entered into a playful plan to hold the King’s manners in check. This they called “lugging the sow by the ear,” and there is a letter from the Marquis of Buckingham to the Queen in which he tells her “that in obedience to her desire he has pulled the King’s ear till it is as long as any sow’s.”

The death of the Queen put an end to all show of checking the King’s hilarity. But in this the Marquis of Buckingham can scarcely be blamed, because the King himself, being the Sovereign, and a very much older man than the Favourite, was the one who set the bad example. With Prince Charles the King’s course was different. He was fond of giving him, from the depths of his pedantic learning, pearls of wisdom that he never wore himself. “Do as I bid you do but never as you see me do,” would have been an excellent way of

## *The Lady of Bleeding Heart Yard*

expressing himself to his son if he ever thought of it ; and in some ways at least Prince Charles followed this maxim. He was most correct ; and it is quite likely that he looked upon some of his father's habits as beacons to be avoided. Unfortunately these beacons did not include the Marquis of Buckingham. The Favourite was the bane of them both. His influence was boundless, and the marvel was that he managed to dominate them so long.

These things did not make matters easy for Frances. The Villiers family were too much in evidence in her married life for her to have any peace. And Prince Charles, in spite of the fact that she and her husband lived in his house, was always ready to side with the Marquis of Buckingham against her. For the Villiers family vented on her their exasperation at Lady Hatton's ability to withstand their demands, and did their best to make Frances miserable. They did not call it making Frances miserable. On the contrary they were always ready to point out that it was for her own good, and that, had her mother fallen in with their proposals, the person to benefit by their kind efforts to provide for my Lord Purbeck was Frances herself ; but Frances remained loyal to her mother, and the result was a whole series of rifts in the domestic lute.

Lady Hatton was not behind in showing her resentment. She and Frances between them could quite easily stand up to a whole regiment of Villiers, and so far as wit and reason were concerned, come off best in the encounter. But wit and reason did not rule the Court, and the Villiers family still reigned there. This Lady Hatton countered in her own way, for since the Court had become no fit place for her, she did not want it to influence her daughter. And that Frances might not fret for the gaiety she had been used to while Queen Anne of Denmark lived, she gave parties herself that were really magnificent. The Queen had not been dead a year before she

## *Lady Hatton "at home"*

planned and executed a series of weekly festivities beginning before Christmas and going on till Lent. They were the sort of parties Richard Barham so ably describes—barring the finale—in his *Legend of Bleeding Heart Yard*. Feasting, music, masques, and plays, and such dancing as was then in vogue—galliards, corantoes, and common measures—in which the guests "bestirred themselves very lively."

Standing invitations were issued to her friends and relations and especially to "the Viscount Purbeck and his lady, the Earl of Warwick and his lady, Mr. Treasurer, with his sons and daughters, who is commonly very jovial at such meetings"—according to a correspondent of Sir Dudley Carleton. Sir Dudley Carleton was not present himself because of being on an Embassy elsewhere.

So on Thursday evenings there was much rumbling of coaches and clattering of horses under the double-arched entrance to Hatton House in Holborn. Servants hurried to and fro. Guests called to one another across the courtyard and assisted ladies to alight in a great flare of torches from the street to the door. And from within came the hum of many voices like a tide that rises and falls afar off. No wonder that the people outside—the uninvited—marvelled at the magnificence of the Lady Hatton, and hinted—sour grapes, of course—that it all came from the sorceries of Dr. Lambe, the astrologer, who had succeeded Mr. Forman in the fashionable mysteries.

Inside the house—in the warmth and the light of blazing fires and a myriad candles—was the charming hostess, dignified and lovely, dressed in the very height of the mode, taking her place in the centre of the brilliant assembly and her pleasure in seeing her guests happy.

Among these guests must be mentioned my Lord Treasurer and his family, for one of them at least has a great deal to do with Lady Hatton's story. My Lord Treasurer was that

## *The Lady of Bleeding Heart Yard*

Earl of Suffolk who, some years before on behalf of the King, had passed sentence on Sir Edward Coke when the latter had been shorn of his judicial greatness in the Star Chamber. He had a large family—seven sons and four daughters. The fourth daughter, Margaret, can be dismissed at once, as she died in her infancy. But one or two of the others have to be spoken of at rather greater length because they flitted in and out of Lady Hatton's life, and there was never a time when some of them at least were not in close touch with Frances. They went to the making of the social environment of the times, and it is only too evident that the very human Frances reacted to its influences.

My Lord Treasurer's seven sons were :

Theophilus, who succeeded his father as Earl of Suffolk.

Thomas, who was created Earl of Berkshire, and married the Lady Elizabeth Cecil, eldest daughter of Lady Hatton's brother the Earl of Exeter. Lady Elizabeth was sister of the Lady Diana Cecil who married Henry de Vere, Earl of Oxford.

Henry Howard.

Sir Charles Howard, K.C.B.

Sir Robert Howard, K.C.B.

Sir William Howard, K.C.B.

Sir Edward Howard, K.C.B.

The three surviving daughters were the Ladies Elizabeth, Frances, and Katherine Howard. The two elder have left a good deal more than their names behind them. The youngest married William, Earl of Salisbury, cousin of Lady Hatton, and eldest son of that Uncle Robert of hers who had helped to make her the wife of Sir Edward Coke. Thus she and Frances were doubly related by marriage to the family of the Earl of Suffolk.

The Lady Elizabeth Howard was first married to the Lord

## *The Banbury case*

Knolles (he is now called Knollys), Viscount Wallingford, afterwards created Earl of Banbury. Her second husband was Lord Vaux of Harweden. At the time of her first marriage she was only a girl, and her bridegroom was a childless widower old enough to be her grandfather. It was one of those *mariages de convenances* which were the rule when she lived. And although she and her husband were excellent friends, and lived happily together, her regard for him was no other than a granddaughter might be expected to have. The Earl of Banbury died in 1632 at the advanced age of eighty-eight years. And afterwards, as the result of the lady's misguided activities, there was an endless trail of trouble in the House of Lords. For her husband died childless, as was duly verified by an inquisition post-mortem, and sworn to by a jury of twelve. And yet, some time later, the Countess of Banbury brought forward two sons of her own, and claimed for each of them in turn his titles and estates. Edward, the elder of the two, was born in 1627. He died in an affray near Calais while he was still very young, and so passed out of the proceedings. But his mother set up the younger son Nicholas in his place, and calling him Earl of Banbury claimed for him her late husband's possessions.

Nicholas was born in 1631, when the Earl of Banbury was eighty-seven years of age. His mother married Lord Vaux (whose name was Edward) five weeks after the death of her first husband. Nicholas was too young at the time to sit in the House of Lords, and the Civil War following on somewhat disorganized that assembly. So nothing was done. The Commonwealth did not trouble about titles or much interfere with Nicholas one way or the other when he called himself Earl of Banbury ; but at the Restoration, when the House of Lords came into its own again, he was ordered to drop the title. And reminding him that his name was Vaux before his mother



## *The Lady of Bleeding Heart Yard*

chose to call him Earl of Banbury, the House of Lords drew his attention to the property he had inherited from the late Lord Vaux of Harweden, with a request that for the future he would use his own name. This did not deter Nicholas from clinging to the thought of being Earl of Banbury. Nor did it deter his descendants. They claimed the earldom with unfailing regularity as often as they succeeded each other. By 1813 the House of Lords was getting tired of them, and when the final claim was put forward by General Knollys of that date, they were debarred from using the title again. But not before reams had been written and much learned discussion invoked as a result of the Countess of Banbury's activities nearly 200 years before.

The career of her sister, the Lady Frances Howard, was not so far reaching in the matter of creating difficulties to be dealt with by posterity, but it was worse while it lasted. She was the loveliest woman of her time, which began in the early days of Anne of Denmark's Court. At the age of thirteen her family married her to the Earl of Essex, himself only fourteen. He was that Earl of Essex who years afterwards became such a conspicuous figure among Parliament men during the Civil War. Soon after his marriage he went abroad to pursue his studies. His wife remained at home to grow into womanhood. By the time he returned to claim her he had become a serious, country-loving youth, and she a social butterfly who could only thrive in the artificial atmosphere of Courts. Worse than that, she had fallen in love with Robert Carr, Earl of Somerset, the profligate favourite who had preceded the Marquis of Buckingham in the affections of King James I.

She flew to sorcerers and conjurers to find a way out of her trouble, and took into her confidence a Mrs. Turner, widow of a physician, and a woman who acted for ladies as go-between

## *A statute against sorcery*

in such matters. In this way the Countess came under the dominion of Dr. Forman—the notorious necromancer—and visited him at his house in Lambeth Marsh. And there, with all the necessary mystery and superstition, were performed the strange rites which she believed would ultimately relieve her of the Earl of Essex, and make her the wife of the Earl of Somerset instead. Among other things waxen images of the parties figured constantly, having been prepared by Dr. Forman and his confederate. These were subjected to weird incantations—the image of the Earl of Essex being stuck with pins as some authorities aver.

In the first year of King James I a statute had been passed at His Majesty's instigation and it had been enacted that "if any person shall use, practice, or exercise any invocation or conjuration of any evil and wicked spirit, or shall consult, covenant with, entertain, employ, feed or reward any evil and wicked spirit, to or for any intent and purpose; or take up any dead man, woman, or child out of their graves, or the skin, bone, or any part of any dead person, to be used in any manner of witchcraft, sorcery or enchantment, or shall use any witchcraft, sorcery or enchantment, whereby any person shall be killed, destroyed, wasted, consumed, pined or lamed in his or her body, or any part thereof; that then every such offender, their aiders, abettors and counsellors shall suffer the pain of death."<sup>1</sup>

And although this statute was fully acted upon by those persons who were responsible for carrying it out, superstition had such a hold of everyone that there were never wanting wizards to defy it. The Lady Frances Howard, Countess of Essex, was only one client among many who resorted to them.

In fact, her marriage was not a success. She would have nothing to do with her husband, and pined when he took her

<sup>1</sup> GODWIN, "*Lives of the Necromancers*," 1834, p. 407.

## *The Lady of Bleeding Heart Yard*

into the country. With considerable difficulty she brought forward a lawsuit for annulment of the marriage, during the course of which lawsuit a good many falsehoods were told—and acted if everyone is to be believed—and by means of these stratagems she won her case. She then married Robert Carr.

But while the case was pending and she in a turmoil of nervous anxiety as to its issue, a contretemps occurred which resulted in disaster for the persons concerned. The Earl of Somerset was a dull-witted young man who trusted to his looks to carry him through life, for nothing else would do so that he could claim, and he relied on his great friend, Sir Thomas Overbury, to steer him clear of the intricacies of his position and the difficulties of correspondence. Sir Thomas Overbury cautioned him against the character of the Countess of Essex, and, meaning well, advised him as strongly as he could not to marry her. Adding that if he “went on in that business he should do well to look to his standing.” The Earl of Somerset angrily replied that his “legs were strong enough to bear him up ; and that he should make him repent those speeches.” Which he accordingly did, for he repeated them to the lady, and she gave herself no peace until she had silenced Sir Thomas Overbury for ever.

She knew how much the Earl of Somerset relied on his friend in matters requiring intelligence, and she was afraid of his influence. The more she thought of what she considered his impertinent caution the more afraid she became. She turned to Dr. Forman and Mrs. Turner, and with their help enlisted certain other undesirable characters to assist her, contrived to get Sir Thomas Overbury committed to the Tower on a charge of having refused an Embassy to Russia which had been offered to him by the King, and there had him murdered. It was a horrible murder—cold-blooded,



*Bullfinch del.*

*Godfrey Sc.*

MR SIMON FORMAN,  
ASTROLOGER.

*Engraved from the Original Drawing  
in the Collection of the Right Hon<sup>ble</sup>  
LORD MOUNTSTUART.*



## *The Overbury murder trials*

ruthless—the epitome of cruelty. But once free of Sir Thomas Overbury's influence she thought the Earl of Somerset would be sure to marry her. He did.

In course of time the murder came out, and the guilty persons were brought up for trial. This was where Sir Edward Coke came in. Dr. Forman had died in the meantime—on the very day he had prognosticated his demise to his wife—but his necromancer's tools and other "mysteries" remained, and were duly produced in Court. Mrs. Turner, the Lieutenant of the Tower, and two other people concerned in the murder were condemned to death, and so were the Earl and Countess of Somerset—though it is doubtful whether the Earl had any hand in the matter. She confessed, with tears, that she was guilty. He, on oath, averred his innocence. King James I, after some show of bringing them to justice, pardoned them both. But they remained imprisoned in the Tower of London for many years.

When they were brought there the Countess was given the very room where the murder of Sir Thomas Overbury had taken place. But this was too much even for her to bear. She implored the Lieutenant to find her other lodgings, and this accordingly was done.

The Earl of Somerset was released from the Tower in 1621, but not given his freedom. He was detained in the house of his wife's brother-in-law—William Knollys, Viscount Wallingford, afterwards the Earl of Banbury—at Gray's Court, near Henley-on-Thames, which ancient mansion still—in part—exists. They say that he never forgave his Countess. And indeed, if he was innocent it is difficult to see how he could, and they grew so to dislike each other that though living for years in the same house they took the most elaborate precautions to ensure that they should never meet. Their only daughter, Anne, who was born in the Tower, and who at the

## *The Lady of Bleeding Heart Yard*

date of her mother's death in 1632, was sixteen years of age, married William, Earl of Bedford.

The Earl and Countess of Somerset were in the Tower when Lady Hatton was entertaining her friends so sumptuously after the death of Queen Anne of Denmark. They were, therefore, not among those sons and daughters of my Lord Treasurer who were standing guests at Hatton House. On the other hand the Earl of Suffolk's eldest daughter, at that time the Viscountess Wallingford, was often there.

The rest of the family were among the brightest stars that twinkled in Lady Purbeck's firmament. And the one she liked best was my Lord Treasurer's fifth son—Sir Robert Howard.

## IX

### *SIR EDWARD COKE IN PARLIAMENT*

IN JANUARY, 1621, KING JAMES I CALLED A PARLIAMENT—THE first in nearly seven years—and this circumstance gave to Sir Edward Coke the chance for which he had been so long waiting to take an active part in State affairs. He was returned as member for Liskeard, in Cornwall.

He began, at once, to interest himself in righting public wrongs and thereby to win the confidence of the country. He turned his attention to monopolies, patents, and grants of concealment. A Committee of Grievances was formed and he was elected chairman.

He was in his element.

Francis Bacon was now Lord Chancellor, and had been not long before created Lord Verulam and Viscount St. Albans. But he had been unable to resist the temptations of the times, and had succumbed to the bribes of litigants in suits before him. He said this had not altered the impartiality of his judgments, but that did not help him when the day of reckoning came. Not long after the assembling of Parliament he was impeached for corruption in his high office.

With what satisfaction Sir Edward Coke helped to prepare the ground for his impeachment can be imagined. He had no intention of turning the other cheek to his arch-foe. The time had come for the gratification of witnessing his downfall, and he was not a whit behind with it. Indeed, his gratification may be supposed to have been all the greater because his own fall from favour had been brought about partly by the



## *The Lady of Bleeding Heart Yard*

stern rectitude with which he had always refused the temptation of bribes.

The great philosopher did not appear in person to receive the judgment against him. He was ill. But his feelings can hardly have been free from gall if he thought of Sir Edward Coke approaching the bar of the House of Lords to hear Sir James Ley, Lord Chief Justice of the King's Bench, pass sentence : " Francis Lord Viscount St. Albans having confessed the crimes and misdemeanours whereof he was impeached this House doth adjudge that he pay a fine to the King of £40,000—that he be imprisoned in the Tower of London during the King's pleasure—that he be for ever incapable of any office place or employment in the State or Commonwealth—and that he never sit in Parliament or come within the verge of the Court."

With that Francis Bacon passed into private life—though his sentence was afterwards considerably reduced. His imprisonment only lasted two days and his fine was remitted. In the next reign he even received Writ of Summons to Parliament. But he did not take his seat. He devoted some time to his writings and the rest to accumulating debts and making appeals for help. He troubled Sir Edward Coke no more. And in 1626 he was dead.

Meanwhile Sir Edward Coke was on his wings again. The Committee of Grievances had triumphed in the matter of monopolies, and this had not been pleasantly received by the monopolists, of whom many were at Court—the Villiers family among them—and before long the King was anxious to adjourn the Parliament he had called. An address to His Majesty was immediately prepared—Sir Edward Coke had a hand in it—and King James was prayed " to give them further time to finish the bills which they were considering."

King James replied that " the address is an improper

## *The Countess Palatine*

interference with Our Prerogative, as We alone have the power to call, adjourn, and determine Parliament."

There was some further discussion. The Parliament demurred. The King insisted, and in the end had his way.

But in November of the same year—1621—Parliament began to sit again. Two important matters had to be dealt with which obliged the King to make an appeal to the country. The first was the marriage proposed by His Majesty between Prince Charles and the Spanish Infanta, and the second was the to be or not to be of going to war to restore the Palatinate.

The Spanish marriage was not popular. Only the Papists were in favour of it. The bulk of the people were not. But King James had received sop from the Spanish Cerberus and was anxious for the wedding to be brought about. There was a good deal of negotiating, and much time wasted, but it came to nothing in the end.

War to restore the Palatinate was, on the contrary, desired by the people. But King James was invariably averse to fighting, and to fight for another country was the last thing he was anxious to do, though the matter involved the future of his only surviving daughter.

She was the Princess Elizabeth, and she had married in 1613 Frederic V, Count Palatine of the Rhine. The ambition of the Countess Palatine had led her to urge her husband to accept the crown of Bohemia—which had been offered to him—overriding his scruples by telling him that "he should not have married a king's daughter, if he had not the courage to become himself a king," and declaring she "would rather eat a dry crust at a king's table than feast on luxuries at that of an Elector."

She pleaded, persuaded, and planned, protesting that "to reign is glorious were it only for a moment." In the end she had her way. And although it was for longer than a

## *The Lady of Bleeding Heart Yard*

moment that she reigned, it was for only a few months, and when her kingdom was swept away she was worse off than she had been before because the Palatinate went as well.

King James had strongly disapproved of his daughter's courses, and would in no way consent to the Elector Palatine accepting the Crown of Bohemia. He went so far as to "refuse to allow him to be prayed for in the churches, as the King of Bohemia, and even severely reprov'd those who were bold enough to do so without orders." It was therefore galling to King James to find himself expected to come to the rescue when, as a result of ignoring his advice, the royal pair were left destitute. He always stood upon the rights of monarchy, and demanded to know on what good ground his son-in-law had invaded the property of another.

The Baron Dhona, who was the emissary sent to England by the King of Bohemia to raise supplies, pointed out to King James that the offer of a crown by a people could scarcely be called an invasion. To which His Majesty replied :

"So you are of opinion that subjects can dispossess their kings? You are come in good time to England, to spread these principles among the people, that my subjects may drive me away, and place another in my room."

And the only way to appease him that Baron Dhona could think of was by pointing out the difference between an hereditary sovereign and one who was chosen by election.

Sir Edward Villiers—stepbrother of the Marquis of Buckingham and one of the most flagrant of the monopolists—was sent as Ambassador to the King and Queen of Bohemia with a present from King James of £20,000 to his daughter. And this gave rise to a rumour that Sir Edward Villiers had gone to invite the Bohemian royal family to England—a rumour which seriously alarmed the King, for the Marquis of Buckingham was strongly opposed to their return even for a visit. It

## *The Spanish Ambassador*

would seem that His Majesty had no wish to encourage them either, inasmuch as he wrote to Sir Dudley Carleton—who was Ambassador at the Hague—in no uncertain terms : “ . . . if our daughter also do come into these parts, with any intention to transport herself hither, you do use all possible means at this time to divert her ; and rather than fail, to charge her, in Our name and upon Our blessing, that she do not come, without Our good liking and pleasure first signified unto her ; for that her being here now would, for many reasons well known unto Us, be very prejudicial unto the proceedings of that business, which We have now in hand for her husband’s good ; howsoever otherwise, out of Our dear and fatherly affection, We should take great comfort to see her.”

The Bohemian royal family did not come to England. But thereafter became a constant drain on the exchequer of King James. The King and Queen of Bohemia retired to Holland where, in exile and in regal disregard of thrift, their children multiplied in proportion to their lack of means to support them. Their debts increased and their resources diminished. And the one thing King James came to dread was lest they should descend on him in all their force and claim his perpetual hospitality.

He helped them all he could. Many thousands of pounds went out of England to their aid. But he was constitutionally averse to war and compromised as long as he could to avoid it.

The Spanish Ambassador, Gondomar, who had recently come to England, prided himself on having something to do with the King’s attitude. He “ exultingly assured the Spanish Court that they had nothing to fear, as he had so lulled the King of England that neither the cries of his daughter nor the clamours of his subjects would be able to rouse him.”

To King James the wily diplomat “ expressed his regret

## *The Lady of Bleeding Heart Yard*

that the whole Palatinate was not in the hands of his master, in order that he might have the pleasure of surrendering it to the king."<sup>1</sup>

This delicate diplomacy suited King James because he wanted the Spanish marriage, but it increased the difficulties of the Parliament, which was not taken in by Gondomar.

Sir Edward Coke rose to the occasion. He began by moving an address to His Majesty both on the question of the Spanish marriage and on that of the Palatinate :

It is true that the father, even amongst private men, should have power to marry his children, but we may petition the King how his prerogatives are to be exercised for the public good. So the voice of Bellona, not the turtle, must be heard. The King must either abandon his daughter, or engage himself in war. The hope of this match doth make the Papists insolent. To cut off their hopes, he ought to marry the Prince to one of his own religion. On such matters the greatest princes have taken the advice of parliament. Edward III did confer with the Commons about his own marriage ; and in the forty-second year of his reign, growing weary of bearing his armour, treating for peace, he acquainted the Commons with the treaty—whereupon the Commons did beseech him " that he would take his sword in his hand, for a just war was better than a dishonourable peace." In a record, 4, Henry V, we read these words—" it shall hold for ever that it shall be lawful for the Commons to talk of the safety of the kingdom, and the grievances and remedies thereof." The very writ of summons shows that we are called hither to advise for the defence and state of the King and kingdom.

This was not the sort of address James Stuart wanted to hear. *Must* and *ought* were not words he could ever tolerate, and though he could not prevent the address from being carried, he could and did express his grave displeasure :

We wish you to remember that we are an old and experienced

<sup>1</sup> GREEN, "*Lives of the Princesses of England*," vol. v, p. 333.

## *Prerogative*

King, needing no such lessons ; being in our conscience freest of any King alive from hearing or trusting idle reports, which so many of your House as are nearest us can bear witness unto you, if you would give as good ear unto them as you do to some tribunitial orators among you.

The Commons replied by an “ Apologetic Petition,” but so far was it from the King’s idea of what it professed to be that he took offence, and—openly declaring his displeasure towards Sir Edward Coke—stood firmly upon his Prerogative.

This plenopotency of yours invests you in all power upon earth, lacking nothing but the Pope’s, to have the keys also of heaven and purgatory. And touching your excuse of not determining any thing concerning the match of our dearest son, but only to tell your opinion ; first, we desire to know how you could have presumed to determine in that point, without committing high treason. In our former answer to you, we confess we meant Sir Edward Coke’s foolish business. It had well become him, especially being our servant, and one of our council, to have explained himself unto us, which he never did, though he never had access refused to him.

To the Speaker he addressed a letter which he hoped would quell the House :

Make known in our name unto the House, that none therein shall presume henceforth to meddle with any thing concerning our government, or deep matters of state. . . . You shall resolve them in our name, that we think ourselves very free and able to punish any man’s misdemeanour in parliament, as well during the sitting as after—which we mean not to spare hereafter, upon any occasion of any man’s insolent behaviour there that shall be ministered unto us.

The effect of this was not at all what King James expected. Instead of the obedience he looked for, it brought a strong “ Protestation ” which Lord Campbell says was drawn up by

## *The Lady of Bleeding Heart Yard*

Sir Edward Coke, referred to a Committee, and after being adopted by the House was duly entered in the Journals :

That the liberties, franchises, privileges, and jurisdictions of parliament, are the ancient and undoubted birth-right and inheritance of the subjects of England ; and that the arduous and urgent affairs concerning the King, state, and the defence of the realm, and of the Church of England, and the making and maintenance of laws, and redress of mischiefs and grievances which daily happen within this realm, are proper subjects and matter of counsel and debate in parliament ; and that in the handling and proceeding of those businesses, every member of the House hath, and of right ought to have, freedom of speech to propound, treat, reason, and bring to conclusion the same ; that the Commons in parliament have like liberty and freedom to treat of those matters in such order as in their judgements shall seem fittest, and that every such member of the said House hath like freedom from all impeachment, imprisonment, and molestation (other than by censure of the House itself) for or concerning any speaking, reasoning, or declaring of any matter or matters touching the parliament or parliament business.

The King was beside himself with indignation and astonishment. The ink was scarcely dry on the detested pages when he sent for them to be brought to Whitehall, and, under the very eyes of the Privy Council and of the judges whom he had summoned to witness this ebullition of the Divine Right, he tore the Protestation into shreds, and commanded that an Order be made declaring it null and void.

He then issued a Proclamation condemning the actions of the House of Commons and describing the Protestation as "an usurpation which the majesty of a King can by no means endure." And without waiting for the questions of the Spanish marriage and the Palatinate to be settled, on January 6th, 1622, he dissolved the Parliament.

Sir Edward Coke was not present on this occasion.

## *Coke in the Tower*

King James had exercised what privilege he had left, and the author of so much of his trouble was already in prison.

There is—or was—a room in the Tower of London which had once been a kitchen—a low room with stone walls and a cold aspect—and on the door of it was written : “ This room hath long wanted a Cook.” On December 27th, 1621, it got what it had long wanted. The member for Liskeard was conveyed there on the bleak winter day, and lodged within in rigorous confinement. He was forbidden to see any of his friends, servants, or even his most intimate relations. At first he was not even allowed his books, and orders were given for the seizing of his papers from his chambers in the Temple.

As there was no valid reason why he should have been imprisoned old matters were revived against him—his well-known pride and arrogance deemed unseemly—some of his speeches as Lord Chief Justice—even the Bond of Sir Christopher Hatton which he had thought done with years before.

He had to appear before the Privy Council to answer these old charges, but there was no novelty in that. He was quite used to appearing before the Privy Council both to prosecute and to be prosecuted. Nothing came of the charges. And in a little while he was allowed to have his books and his writings, and he settled down to the continuation of his *Commentary on Littleton*, which had been for some time occupying his attention—and by which he is still famous.

All winter he remained there, in that low stone room which had once been a kitchen, working against time to catch what pale light filtered in through the narrow windows, and when evening came poring over the pages by rushlight or candle till bedtime—planning and perfecting his legacy to posterity.

When spring came he was still there. It mattered little



## *The Lady of Bleeding Heart Yard*

in the Tower of London what season of the year it might be. There was so little light and warmth and sunshine in those dank, stone rooms—and high walls always look the same. But his relations were at last allowed to see him, and no doubt brought him fruit and flowers, and told him what was happening in his garden at Stoke Poges, so he knew when spring had passed and summer had come in.

He was released in August, 1622. When freedom came it carried conditions that chafed him. He was no longer to occupy his seat at the Council Table, and he was ordered to remain at his house at Stoke Poges, the King wrathfully declaring that he was "the fittest instrument for a tyrant that ever was in England."

While Sir Edward Coke was in the Tower a storm was gathering from another quarter, which threatened to sweep away not only his own domestic peace of mind, but that of Lady Hatton as well.

It concerned their daughter, Lady Purbeck.

## X

### *TROUBLES OF THE VISCOUNT PURBECK*

IN MAY, 1620, THE VISCOUNT PURBECK WENT ABROAD "UNDER colour of drinking the waters of Spaw, but in fact, as Camden tells us, to hide his being run mad with pride."

This does not sound a very good reason either for going to Spa or for being run mad, but it will have to serve for want of a better. There is no doubt the poor man had troubles enough to cause him to be run mad with anything ; for the Prince's house was not a home where domestic harmony held sway. What with his sisters and brothers, his wife, his mother, his wife's mother, his other relations, her other relations, and all the friends and acquaintances who ranged themselves on one side or the other, the Viscount Purbeck found it impossible to keep his balance between them. The difficulty was, of course, that he was fond of his wife and fond of his family, and could do nothing with any of them. And as so many held places in the Prince's house or in the King's, there were daily opportunities for friction.

The experience of the Viscount and Viscountess Purbeck was such that before long they began to think themselves much ill used. The mothers were the most formidable.

Those who are old enough to have had Victorian mothers-in-law remember the influence those ladies possessed. The boon they conferred by becoming mothers-in-law at all, however unintentionally, was never allowed to be forgotten. Duty and docility went hand in hand before them. They were the power in the home.

## *The Lady of Bleeding Heart Yard*

But this was nothing to the power wielded by mothers-in-law when James I was king. There was something patriarchal about parents then, and, as public opinion was with them, they held despotic sway. It was not at all unusual, therefore, that the Viscount Purbeck should have been under his mother's yoke. He was also under his wife's. And as they both pulled different ways it is no wonder the poor man found it impossible to keep pace with them.

His mother "disrelished" Frances with a fervour which never abated, and the Marquis of Buckingham cordially upheld her, for he disrelished Frances too. The rest of the family supplied unfailing support.

Frances despised them all. She had never known a time when she had not disliked them. And to be forced to live with them for the rest of her life was as good an imitation of purgatory as she ever wished to endure. She knew that they had no affection for her, and never had, and that the only reason why they had struggled so unremittingly to make her one of themselves was because of her expectations, her connections, and her £30,000.

It was not an encouraging reason for entering a family, and Frances bitterly resented it. She was too high-spirited to be docile and adaptable. She would not buy peace by obedience and she felt herself to be immeasurably superior to the whole family of Villiers.

As for Lady Hatton and the Countess of Buckingham, they were like two cats with their backs arched and their claws spread glaring at each other over a kitten—and it did not end at glaring. The Tower of Babel was nothing to them. Lady Hatton had tried at first to make the best of a bad thing that Frances might not be made more unhappy. She encouraged her to be pleasant with her relations-in-law, to overlook as much as she could, and to be kind to her husband.

## *Lady Catherine Manners*

She cautioned her with plenty of that homely advice it is so easy to give and so difficult to take. Nevertheless, the position soon became intolerable. Lady Hatton's own vehement nature was up in arms both at the lack of response from the Villiers family and the inability of the Viscount Purbeck to afford his wife any protection from their unkindness. So she came to the rescue herself, and her rescues were never very tactful. She upheld Frances in any weather, snow or sunshine, gale or frost, and was always ready to give her safe harbourage when—as often happened—she arrived at Hatton House exhausted, weary from battling the storms they raised around her.

Matters were not improved when in May, 1620, the Marquis of Buckingham took a wife. The lady he chose was the richest heiress he could find—the Lady Catherine Manners, only child of the Earl of Rutland. The way he won her was characteristic of himself. It is said that he stole her from her father's house and obtained her father's consent to the marriage to avoid a scandal. The Lady Catherine wanted a peaceful life, and this could be obtained only by agreeing with her husband in everything. She was plain and she was pliable, and King James I called her “that puir fule Kate”—but even the Marquis of Buckingham could not have everything. Her portrait is at Hampton Court Palace in that group of the Villiers family already mentioned. It is reproduced here.

Lady Hatton's troubles did not end with those of Frances. She still had her own. There was the constant battle with Sir Edward Coke for means to live, and the renewed contests over Hatton House with every successive Bishop of Ely. And when she had quelled the latest Bishop a new adversary appeared on the horizon. This was the Spanish Ambassador—Gondomar. Ely House, that portion of the Bishop's Palace

## *The Lady of Bleeding Heart Yard*

that yet remained to him, was assigned to Gondomar for the term of his residence in London, and this made him Lady Hatton's next-door neighbour.

Lady Hatton disapproved of Gondomar because he was making a fool of the King and she disapproved of him just as much because he was a Papist. Her own leanings were towards Puritanism, and she was entirely at one with the Parliament in the matter of the Spanish marriage and the supplies for the Palatinate. Her sympathies were with the Queen of Bohemia, whom she eagerly befriended. When therefore Gondomar took up his residence so close to her, she did not welcome him with any neighbourly spirit ; instead, she got on the warpath without undue delay :

Gondomar hath waded already very deep, and ingratiated himself with divers persons of quality, ladies especially ; yet he could do no good upon the Ladie Hatton, whom he desired, lately, that in regard he was her next door neighbour [at Ely House] he might have the benefit of her back gate to go abroad into the fields, but she put him off with a compliment ; whereupon, in a private audience lately with the king, among other passages of merriment, he told him, that my Ladie Hatton was a strange ladie, for she would not suffer her husband, Sir Edward Coke, to come in at her fore door, nor him to go out at her back door, and so related the whole business.<sup>1</sup>

Finding Lady Hatton obdurate in the matter of entrances and exits, Gondomar opened a back door in the wall of Ely House to permit the entrance of Catholics to the chapel. Lady Hatton watched the proceedings with displeasure, and to signify her annoyance "hindred him" in every way that presented itself. She was not alone in her dislike of him. He had to have a guard always in attendance because the

<sup>1</sup> *Letters of James Howell, ed. 1737, p. 119.*

## *The King as peace-maker*

people of London were as hostile as Lady Hatton, for Gondomar was influencing the King against them in the matter of the Palatinate. At the gates of Ely House there was a great show of beating up recruits for the King of Bohemia—drums rolling—soldiers calling to arms—crowds gathering and shouting their views before the two houses. And Lady Hatton went in and out of hers with much relish of Gondomar's discomfort. She did not, however, relish the scene behind the house where priests and Spaniards were filing in through the Spanish Ambassador's new backway.

So far she had been resolute in refusing to be reconciled to Sir Edward Coke. But in July, 1621, King James took upon himself the task of mediating between the Lady of Hatton House and the member for Liskeard. King James prided himself on his capacity for learned discourse, and he was fond of bringing in Biblical quotations which he looked on as irrefutable. Lady Hatton could not dismiss them as not applying to her case without offending the exalted peace-maker, and to please him she agreed to a truce. She would be on speaking terms with her husband, and for the present she would not renew hostilities. That was as far as she would go. She could not forgive him—and she never did forgive him—for withholding her rents and for marrying Frances to a Villiers against her will.

Perhaps to make sure that the King was not going to oblige her to take Sir Edward Coke to live with her she allowed the Duke of Lenox in August, 1621, to take a lease of Hatton House. He does not appear to have immediately occupied the premises. In those days it was no uncommon thing for the parties to a lease to sign, seal and deliver it a year or two, or even more, before the date when the term was due to commence.

The Duke of Lenox was a Stuart, and cousin of the King.

## *The Lady of Bleeding Heart Yard*

He had been promised a lease of Ely House when the Spanish Ambassador should vacate it, and he was prepared to show what pomp and grandeur could do if he might be allowed to occupy both the houses. Lady Hatton was ready to consent if only to get rid of Gondomar. Soon afterwards the Duke of Lenox was created also Duke of Richmond, and with his lady—the third—he began to inaugurate a degree of magnificence in his manner of living which in Holborn had never been surpassed.

In August and September, 1621, Lady Hatton and Frances attended the masque produced by Ben Jonson, which he called *The Metamorphosed Gypsies*, and which was performed before King James no less than three times. In August at Burghley-on-the-Hill and at Belvoir, and in September at Windsor.

Not to repeat too many descriptions of masques it will only be necessary to say that the Gypsies addressed the ladies present with verses composed for their acceptance, and duly considered appropriate ; and perhaps it will not be irrelevant to quote the rhymes that the Second and Fifth Gypsies spoke to the Viscountess Purbeck and Lady Hatton respectively. To Frances the Second Gypsy said :

“ Help me wonder ; here’s a Book  
Where I would for ever look ;  
Never yet did Gypsy trace  
Smoother lines in Hands or Face ;  
Venus here doth Saturn move  
That you should be Queen of Love  
And the other Stars consent.  
Only Cupid’s not content ;  
For though you the theft disguise  
You have robb’d him of his Eyes ;

## *Lady Hatton and the gypsy*

And to shew his envy further  
Here he chargeth you with Murther ;  
Say although that at your sight  
He must all his Torches light—  
Though your either Cheek discloses  
Mingled Baths of Milk and Roses—  
Though your Lips be Banks of Bliss—  
Where he plants and gathers Kisses—  
And yourself the Reason why  
Wisest Men for Love may die—  
You will turn all Hearts to Tinder  
And shall make the World one Cinder.”

In which a shrewd amount of truth lay beneath the obvious flattery. Lady Hatton, by the Fifth Gypsy, was addressed somewhat differently :

“ Mistress of a fairer Table  
Hath no History nor Fable ;  
Others’ Fortunes may be shown  
You are Builder of your own.  
And whatever Heaven hath given you  
You preserve the State still in you ;  
That which Time would have depart  
Youth without the help of Art  
You do keep still and the Glory  
Of your Sex is but your Story.”

By which it may be inferred that Lady Hatton, at forty-three, still looked young, and that she scorned the use of cosmetics.

Whether the Viscount Purbeck was still at Spa or whether he attended the masque with the ladies of his family is not



## *The Lady of Bleeding Heart Yard*

apparent, but he was certainly in England not long after, for early in 1622 he was restored, as it were, to normal health, and embracing a change of religion.

Unable to find that comfort in his domestic circle to which he was entitled, the Viscount Purbeck had taken to his bosom one Father Fisher—or Persens ; he is known by both names—a Jesuit priest, and having confided his difficulties to him, had been urged to enter the Roman Catholic Faith. Before long his wavering inclination had ceased to waver any longer, and the Viscount Purbeck became a Papist. It was really rather a bold thing to do in the reign of James I, but no doubt the Viscount Purbeck relied on his brother's influence with the King to make things right, and not in vain, in spite of the position he occupied in the Prince's house and the Prince's views in the matter of religion.

The Viscount Purbeck found himself so comforted by the ministrations of the good father that he betook himself to the Countess, his mother, and—according to the Records of the English Province of the Society of Jesus—gave her “so good an account of the said father and of the consolation he had received of him” that the Countess of Buckingham herself began to have leanings towards a change of Creed. She even sent her son to call the father, as she greatly desired to speak to him, and heard him “discourse fully of the Catholic Faith”—with the result that all this came to the ears of King James, who, in some concern, sent for William Laud.

William Laud was afterwards Archbishop of Canterbury, and he has left in his diary some account of what happened : “April 23rd being Tuesday in Easter Week the King sent for me and set me into a Course about the Countess of Buckingham who about that time was wavering in point of religion.”

A month later his course appears to have been in full swing, for his diary mentions a conference on May 24th between

## *A change of faith*

himself and Mr. Fisher, a Jesuit, in the presence of the Marquis of Buckingham and his mother the Countess, and there was yet another conference at which King James was present. Yet in spite of the Archbishop's eloquence and the King's concern, the upshot of the matter was that the Countess of Buckingham followed her eldest son into the Roman Catholic fold, and the Marquis of Buckingham induced King James to give special permission—and it was very special permission in those days—for the Jesuit father “to live on parole in her house in London,” which for the next ten years the father accordingly did. He lived in the garden house or lodge of her lodgings at Whitehall.

All this did not prove to have an harmonious influence on the married life of the Viscount and Viscountess Purbeck. Apart from the fact that they now worshipped in different Churches, there was a power behind the mother that helped to militate against the wife; and whether these cross-currents whirled the Viscount Purbeck out of his depth or whether his mental disorder would have developed in any case certain it is that by May, 1622, the poor man was again in a state of frenzy. This happened even before his mother's conversion had been completed and while William Laud was still in his course about her.

Apart from anything else a crisis had arisen in the home life of the Viscount Purbeck which was of itself sufficient to make him behave like a madman, even if his disorder proved to be no more serious than an alarming eruption of temper. To put it briefly, his mother had decided that the time had come when he and Frances would be better apart, and, having conveyed to the Marquis of Buckingham certain suspicions that she entertained against Frances, so worked on that nobleman's sense of grievance that he readily upheld her in her decision.

## *The Lady of Bleeding Heart Yard*

The fact was that the Howard family—and Sir Robert Howard in particular—had sympathized with Frances in her afflictions. The elder sons and daughters were considerably older than herself, and although Sir Robert Howard was one of the younger ones he was a good ten years her senior in age. Two members of the family were already connections by marriage. They had all stood by Lady Hatton in her disputes with Sir Edward Coke, and they now stood by her daughter in her trials with her husband's people. This was the more pronounced because owing to the machinations of the Marquis of Buckingham, the Earl of Suffolk was no longer Lord Treasurer, and had, indeed, been accused of causing the Crown a loss of revenue. Sir Edward Coke, presiding in the Star Chamber at the time, had endeavoured to prove that the sum was £50,000, and had wanted to inflict the payment of a fine of £100,000, together with a term of imprisonment in the Tower until the money be paid. The Council had reduced the fine to £30,000, but had allowed the sentence of imprisonment to stand, and accordingly the Earl of Suffolk and his wife had been taken to the Tower.

Sir Edward Coke was, of course, nursing old feuds against the late Lord Treasurer for sympathizing with Lady Hatton instead of with himself, and for being the King's mouthpiece when he was dismissed from the Chief Justiceship of the King's Bench. But he had heard the scandals against Frances that the Countess of Buckingham was disseminating, and there was, therefore, another, newer grievance for which he was taking toll in advance. He was, in fact, reversing the order of the Scriptures and visiting the sins of the son upon the father. Yet if there was anyone to blame for the sins of the son—except the son himself—it was Sir Edward Coke.

Frances had never been able to forget that she had been

## *Justice in the melting-pot*

married by her father against her will when she was fifteen, and she had never ceased to resent it.

In England—to-day as in the reign of James I—Church and State forbid the correction of matrimonial mistakes except on conditions which carry a stigma against one or other of the spouses when the marriage bond is cut. In other ways reason and humanity predominate. Allowances are made for the mistakes and follies of youth—for age, good sense, and experience will correct most of them. But England's marriage laws deem people never to be young. Or so it seems. For the half-fledged, foolish fancy so often mistaken for love is ruled—when it leads to the altar—to be the *grande passion* of a lifetime—the perfect union which does not always belong to Nature and scarcely ever to immaturity. To have it so is to persist in proving how far our laws have yet to go to be brought into line with perfection.

In the days of James Stuart our laws and perfection were still further out of line. Superstition held the scales, and corruption weighed them down. The divorce of Prerogative and Parliament had not yet taken place. The calling of Parliament depended on the act of the King, and James Stuart forbore to act except under compulsion. Even such justice as there was lay in the melting-pot. The onus of drawing it out and fashioning it into a support which has upheld English law ever since fell to Sir Edward Coke, to the man who, to his daughter, was anything but just.

There is reason to be thankful to Sir Edward Coke—to owe him a debt of gratitude. But the debt is posterity's, not his daughter's. What he did for his country he could, and would, have done had Frances Coke never married at all. He sacrificed her on the chance of gratifying ambition—as it proved in vain. Yet ambition then did not lie in patriotism. Patriotism followed when the sacrifice failed.

## *The Lady of Bleeding Heart Yard*

What made it all the worse was that it was impossible for a man of Sir Edward Coke's knowledge, age, experience, and exceptional legal abilities, not to have known that love will neither be driven nor denied, and that sooner or later to the Frances Cokes of the world it will come. And to them a loveless marriage is a poor substitute. Nor is the wedding ceremony a spell. It does not weave round an unloving spouse an infallibility against ever loving anyone. Neither is its beautiful ideal always within the grasp even of loving spouses.

Sir Edward Coke knew this quite well. He knew, too, that his daughter—on the very threshold of womanhood—lovely, gifted, vivid, and bewitching, could not go through life in the Prince's court and never be a prey to temptation. In marrying her to Sir John Villiers he had forced her to take the risk. He had left love to chance—and so to Sir Robert Howard.

## XI

### *FRANCES FACES DEFEAT*

SIR ROBERT HOWARD WAS EVERYTHING THAT THE VISCOUNT Purbeck was not. He was young, attractive, accomplished, good-looking, member of one of the most illustrious families in the kingdom, and inheritor of a still more illustrious ancestry. He had endearing qualities—sympathy, charm of manner, and a responsive wit. He possessed other virtues—more solid—a profound devotion and a steady constancy.

It is useless to speculate as to what Sir Robert Howard ought or ought not to have done according to modern standards of morality. He lived in the reign of James I. Besides, they say that he gloried in his love for the lady Viscountess Purbeck, so there is no more that can profitably be said.

It was otherwise with Frances. At this period she admits to a friendship with Sir Robert Howard, but to nothing more. It was a lifelong friendship built on sympathy and understanding. None knew better than he how much she had come to be in need of both. Owing to his position at Court he was constantly in her company. She met him wherever she went : in the Prince's house where she lived, at Hatton House, at Suffolk House, at Audley End, the Earl of Suffolk's palatial mansion near Saffron Walden, which Sir William Dugdale describes as second only to Hampton Court Palace itself. She met him in the houses of her numerous relations and of his, and in the homes of their mutual friends. It was impossible to attend any great function without finding him

## *The Lady of Bleeding Heart Yard*

there. She saw him so often that it was only a step to seeing him still more often because he sought her. When he was away at his house in Shropshire—he was Burgess for Bishop's Castle—she missed him. He was kind to her and he loved her and she grew to depend on his sympathy and regard.

But that is not to say she went any further. Yet the Countess of Buckingham conceived her duty to lie and the duty of her family to lie in keeping Frances under observation. She left no stone unturned to prove how admirably adapted she would have been to a job in the Secret Service—yet even the Countess of Buckingham could find no proofs against her daughter-in-law.

There seems little doubt that this was the crisis that drove the Viscount Purbeck into a frenzy and precipitated the storm that had been lowering for some time on the horizon of the Villiers family circle. Frances would have it believed that while not professing to love her husband she was friendly with him, and that without the interference and disharmonious influence of his family they would have been fairly happy together. The Viscount Purbeck was certainly fond of his wife, and his family thought he was far too indulgent. They said she had bewitched him. If she had, beauty, charm, and unexpectedness were her only witchery, and by these she swayed him.

After their marriage she had often been rather less than sweet—she had treated him with some degree of that scorn with which she was so lavish towards his family—but later her manner towards him had changed. According to Archbishop Laud she had “used him at her pleasure,” and by this he meant that she had become amiable where before she had been unkind, that she might thereby cover her friendship with Sir Robert Howard, and take advantage of the Viscount

## *A crisis*

Purbeck's "weakness and distemper" to make him do whatever she fancied.

This was the opinion of the Countess of Buckingham, and she infused it into the family. She may have been right, but she could not prove it. She certainly found "informers" and listened to "discontented servants' tales," but the result of her manoeuvres was negative. Nevertheless, with that faculty for thinking the worst, she needed nothing more to convince her of what she was ready to believe. The very charms of Frances, coupled with those of Sir Robert Howard, and added to the Viscount Purbeck's lack of them, formed an equation she had no difficulty whatever in solving.

About the very time that William Laud was having his conference with Father Fisher in the presence of the Marquis and Countess of Buckingham, something happened which finally broke up the Purbeck *ménage*. It is tantalizing not to know what it was. But that is the worst of history. It leaves out so much that it ought to put in, and makes the motives of those who lived before us so much the more elusive. Something serious certainly happened. For the Viscount Purbeck, by command of the Marquis of Buckingham, was removed to Wallingford House at Whitehall and forced to remain there. The Marquis had recently bought the house for his own use so it was tantamount to placing the Viscount Purbeck in his brother's custody.

The Viscount Purbeck did not approve of the course. Getting into a room next the street, he broke the glass windows with his bare fists till the blood poured from them, in what looks like an attempt to get away. His efforts proved fruitless. They were, in fact, merely regarded as further evidence of mental disorder, and he was considered to have proved himself incapable of rational behaviour. Thereupon the Marquis of Buckingham, having already taken possession of



## *The Lady of Bleeding Heart Yard*

his brother's person, took charge also of his estate, and this included everything that belonged to Frances, because, in view of her husband's mental incapacity, his administrators had the power to hold her property as well as his.

There were scenes with Frances. She quite naturally rebelled. She said that it was monstrous for a husband to be removed from his wife by force, and she demanded his return. She was told that he was not in a fit condition to have a wife. She retorted—and with some reason—that if he was not too mad to live with his family he was not too mad to live with her.

The Countess of Buckingham adopted the role of the outraged British matron, and dominated the scene, her family ready to support her should she show signs of flagging, but she showed no signs of flagging. By the time she had finished with her daughter-in-law she had disposed of every shred of character Frances had ever possessed. There was nothing to the point that she could think of that she had left unsaid, and if Frances had hoped to rouse the slightest sympathy in her mother-in-law's heaving, wrathful bosom, she quickly realized her mistake.

She asked for some provision to be made for her out of her plenty. Practically all her husband had she had brought him, and surely she was entitled to some of it. She might as well have asked for the kingdom, for nothing could transcend their indignation, and they immediately cast her off. Then her home was dismantled. Even her jewels, her apparel, and her "household stuffe" were carried away. She was left destitute.

But, just as five years before Frances had fought for the right to be free, so now she fought for the right to have and to hold what was her own. Undaunted she went to them again; and this shows what courage she had, for she went

## *Frances goes to her mother*

to the very house to argue with them all in person. She demanded to be judged innocent until she had been proved anything else, told them that they could not despoil her of the wherewithal to live, and asked for "relief in her necessities."

It was all refused. They told her she should have nothing from them—that she had forfeited the right even to what had been her own but was now the Viscount Purbeck's, and, that there might be no further argument, "she was most barbarously carried by force into the open street and there left void of all relief."

What the passers-by thought when they saw the Viscountess Purbeck dumped down, struggling and protesting, in the public thoroughfare and there left, will never be known. They were fairly used to strange scenes in the streets because people then were not so averse as they are now to sharing their feelings with the world, but of course it caused a lot of scandal and in less than no time was all over the town.

Frances fled to her mother.

There is reason to believe that the Duke of Lenox and Richmond was occupying Hatton House, and it is probable that Lady Hatton was at Corfe Castle. She was in mourning. Her father had died in February, 1622, and she had retired from her usual round of social activities for the time being. It was no uncommon thing for her to descend on Corfe Castle when she wanted rest and quiet in her moments of economy, and the salubrious air and wild beauty of the Isle of Purbeck often fitted in with her feelings.

The year 1622 had opened very badly indeed. Apart from the death of her father, and disputes with the Villiers family, it was not altogether exhilarating to have a husband in prison, even though she did not concern herself much about him, and as the year progressed the clouds grew blacker till they

## *The Lady of Bleeding Heart Yard*

burst at last in a torrent of trouble with the *débâcle* of her daughter's married life. To add to the unpleasantness Christopher—Kit Villiers as he was called—youngest brother of the Viscount Purbeck, not to be outdone by his relations in the matter of heiresses, had cast his eyes on one of Lady Hatton's nieces, a daughter of the Earl and Countess of Berkshire. As the Earl of Berkshire was Thomas Howard, and his wife was another of Lady Hatton's nieces, Kit Villiers was adding fuel to the flames of a singularly awkward situation.

He was a most unprepossessing person and the young lady disliked him. Besides, she was alarmed at the prospect of undergoing at the hands of his family the same treatment as she saw meted out to Frances. She refused to marry Kit Villiers, refused to have anything whatever to do with him, and to prevent further argument ran away to get rid of him. In this she was aided and abetted by her uncle the Earl of Oxford. The Marquis of Buckingham was furious, and pointed out to the King that, as Great Chamberlain, the Earl of Oxford had overstepped the bounds of his office, knight-errantry being in no way part of his duties ; whereupon the Earl of Oxford was committed to the Tower. He bore his punishment with the better grace in that he had succeeded in assisting the lady in her escape, and Kit Villiers had to seek elsewhere for a wife than among the nieces of Lady Hatton. What with shutting up the Viscount Purbeck at Wallingford House, ejecting Frances from the Villiers family bosom, and incarcerating the Earl of Oxford in the Tower, the Marquis of Buckingham had as much as he could cope with, and was in no mood to look lightly on anything Lady Hatton or Frances might be moved to do.

Unfortunately for the Marquis of Buckingham, however, when Frances arrived spent and miserable, craving her mother's

## *Lady Hatton guards Frances*

assistance, Lady Hatton was moved to do a good deal. She did it in unstinting measure. To say that she was furious with the Villiers family is to put it mildly. She was superlative in her wrath. Frances—the shrine wherein lay all her treasure—the sanctuary of her love—to be desecrated and robbed before her eyes by a crowd of creatures whose only power lay in a foolish king's despotic whim ! There was something wrong with power that this should be ; or was it Prerogative in which the evil lay ? She was fast going over to the cause of franchise and the Parliament. She had left the doubtful haven of despotism and Divine Right.

Nevertheless, she tried to be patient with the Marquis of Buckingham because only by patience could anything be done. She knew this well enough in theory, but in practice her tempestuous nature could not submit calmly to such an outrage, and with the best intentions she took up the cudgels in her usual dynamic way. She got nothing from the Marquis of Buckingham. She was told that the Viscount Purbeck was much deranged, that he was in no condition to live with his wife, that the unkindness of Frances was the cause of his distemper, and that her conduct made it impossible for them to live together even were it not so. All the servants' tales vouched for by the Countess of Buckingham's sleuths were repeated at great length, and it was made clear that if the recital did not convince Lady Hatton of her daughter's guilt as abundantly as it had convinced the Villiers family the fault lay with Lady Hatton.

The only concession the Duke of Buckingham was prepared to make—and promised he would make—was some provision of income for the Lady Viscountess Purbeck out of her own means. This was the most Lady Hatton could get from him, and it was little enough, for the promise did not materialize.

## *The Lady of Bleeding Heart Yard*

Lady Hatton lost no time in questioning Frances about Sir Robert Howard. She mentioned the matter whenever she thought of it ; and she never ceased thinking of it. Frances maintained her innocence. She was vehement, indignant, pathetic, and martyred by turns. She denied the stories repeated to her mother by the Villiers family—called them “devised tales”—and when there was any foundation of truth in anything they said she explained it away quite plausibly and with every interpretation of innocence.

Lady Hatton believed her, for she was herself uncompromisingly virtuous. She would have had little sympathy for an illicit affair of the heart, and she would have argued that as she had been married against her will to a man she did not love and had steered clear thereafter of anything approaching an affair of the heart, any other woman similarly placed could do the same. But had Frances admitted temptation she would have done what she could for her, and her advice—though perhaps unpalatable—would have been sound. Frances did not put it to the test ; she protested her innocence to all and sundry, and if there was anything to confide no one knew it but herself. She was at one with the disciples of virtue. But she was wretchedly unhappy. Her misery could not be denied, and it wrung Lady Hatton’s heart to see her so. She would have given anything to bring back the merriness of her laughter—to see her as vivacious as she used to be. Frances was listless and fretful by turns, as though a burden lay upon her that wore away her patience or wearied her with its weight.

For above three months she remained with her mother, waiting for the Marquis of Buckingham to keep his promise, exercising the tolerance Lady Hatton preached, and listening to the words of advice Lady Hatton thought it her duty to bestow. Sir Robert Howard was conspicuous by his absence

## *Frances writes to the Duke*

—unless Frances met him without her mother's knowledge and consent—for Lady Hatton would have been the first to demand circumspection in face of such a fame.

At last Frances wrote to the Marquis of Buckingham. The letter is without date, but clearly belongs to this period of her life :

My Lord,

Though you may judge what pleasure there is in the conversation of a man in the distemper you see your brother in, yet the dutie I owe to a husband and the affection I bear him (which sicknesse shall not diminish), makes me much desire to be with him to adde what comfort I can to his afflicted mind, since his onely desire is my companie, which, if it please you to satisfie him in, I shall with a very good will suffer with him, and think all but my dutie, though I think every wife would not do so. But if you can so far dispense with the lawes of God as to keep me from my husband, yet aggravate it not by restraining me from his means and all other contentments, but which, I think, is rather the part of a Christian, you especially ought much rather to studie comforts for me than to adde ills to ills, since it is the marriage of your brother makes me thus miserable. For if you please but to consider not only the lamentable estate I am in, deprived of all comforts of a husband, and having no means to live on, besides falling from the hopes my fortune then did promise me ; for you know very well I came no beggar to you, though I am like so to be turned off.

For your own honor and conscience sake, take some course to give me satisfaction, to tye my tongue from crying to God and the world for vengeance for the unworthy dealing I have received. And think not to send me again to my mother's, where I have stayed this quarter of a year, hoping (for that my mother said you promised) order should be taken for me ; but I never received a pennie from you.

Her confidence of your nobleness made me so long silent ; but now, beleive me, I will sooner begg my bread in the streets to all your dishonours, then any more trouble my friends, and especially my mother, who was not only content to afford us part of the

## *The Lady of Bleeding Heart Yard*

little means she hath left her, but whilst I was with her was continually distempered with devised tales which came from your familie, and withal lost your good opinion, which before she either had, or you made show of it ; but had it been real, I cannot think her words would have been so translated, nor in the power of discontented servants' tales to have ended it.

My lord, if the great honour you are in can suffer you to have so mean a thought as of so miserable a creature as I am, so made by too much credulitie of your fair promises, which I have waited for performance of almost these five years : and now it were time to despair, but that I hope you will one day be yourself, and be governed by your own noble thoughts, and then I am assured to obtain what I desire, since my desires be so reasonable and but for mine own, which, whether you grant or no, the affliction my poor husband is in (if it continue) will keep my mind in a continual purgatorie for him, and will suffer me to sign myself no other, then your unfortunate sister,

F. PURBECK.

The Marquis of Buckingham took no substantial notice of this appeal, so Lady Hatton followed it up by going to the King ; and James Stuart, whose time seems to have been much usurped by other people's domestic broils, promised to look into the matter, and did so, for he dropped the Favourite a hint that it would be better for his credit if he were to provide his sister-in-law with some sort of alimony, in view of the fact that he was handling £30,000 of hers on behalf of his brother. Besides, there was no doubt that public sympathy was with the Viscountess Purbeck, whose cause the people had espoused. James Stuart himself had leanings in that direction. He was tender with the feelings and reputation of a young lady whom he had known from childhood, for whose marriage he had made himself responsible, and in whose guilt he was far from believing.

The Marquis of Buckingham could not refuse the King's

## *A deed prepared*

request. Nevertheless, he carried it out in his own way. He had a Deed prepared purporting to allow his sister-in-law 1,000 merks a year (£666 13s. 4d. of our money) and promising the return of her jewellery, wearing apparel, and household stuff. But all this was to be done only on condition that she undertook never to live with the Viscount Purbeck again, or claim him for her husband.

When Frances saw the Deed she felt affronted. At first she refused to have anything to do with it, for, though she was not particularly attached to the Viscount Purbeck, she would not have her liberties interfered with by his family—the more especially as she knew the strength of his affection, the depth of his affliction, and the need he had of her. This is her version of the matter ; but the version of the Villiers family is that she only wanted to return to him because of his weakness and pliability which she could work at her will, and use to cover her friendship with Sir Robert Howard, a friendship that without her husband's protection she could no longer sustain with credit, except in a very restricted manner.

The Marquis of Buckingham had no intention of putting the rival versions to the test. He might easily have said with James Stuart when His Majesty had tried his wits at administering justice : “ I could get on very well hearing one side only, but when both sides have to be heard, by my saul I know not which is right.”

The Marquis of Buckingham had resolved that his sister-in-law's side should not be right. He stood firm to the bond, and it looked as though they had arrived at a deadlock, but Lady Hatton, who thought the Viscount Purbeck no loss and dismissed Sir Robert Howard as done with, saw no reason why Frances should not agree to the terms. And Frances, finding that to stand out too strenuously was only liable to raise suspicion, yielded at last.



## *The Lady of Bleeding Heart Yard*

The Deed was signed, the first instalment paid, the jewels, apparel, and household stuff grudgingly handed over, and Frances took up her life again, dividing her time between the Prince's house and that of her mother. That the King and Prince should have permitted her to return to the Prince's house seems to make clear that they were far from sharing the Countess of Buckingham's opinion of her daughter-in-law.

Some nineteenth-century authors have said that Frances eloped from her husband in 1621 with Sir Robert Howard. Burke, in his *Extinct Peerages of Great Britain and Ireland* (ed. 1846, p. 547), makes this statement. But all contemporary record denies it.

When Frances returned to take up her life where she had left it off, she was in her early twenties, and she was infinitely more lovely then than she had been at fifteen. The grace of girlhood had been transformed into the polish of intelligent womanhood. The crosses and criticisms of her married life had taught her to shoulder responsibility. She had learnt that happiness is not necessarily a corollary to winsomeness, wealth and worth. There are many different ways of being happy, and some of them are very elusive, but whatever they are she found that she must seek them for herself, and that she could not rely on externals to produce them simply as a matter of course. She was rather defiant, and she was still unsubmissive. She still fought for the right to live her own life. She had not discovered the value of moderation. She was not at all patient, and she was not at all wise.

The Villiers family, of course, made things very difficult for her, both because of the way they had treated her, and because, when she returned to the Prince's house, though her husband was absent the rest of the family were there—or thereabouts—and they continued to be unkind to her. So they were asking for trouble. Perhaps trouble was what

## *The Prince goes to Spain*

they wanted, for they were anxious to be free of her and yet to keep her fortune. There is no doubt that they had thrown her into worse temptation than before, whatever provocation they believed they had, for what they had done was the very thing best calculated to send her to Sir Robert Howard for that comfort and appreciation which was so sadly lacking in their own attitude towards her. Things were at this pass when King James sent the Marquis of Buckingham and Prince Charles out of England on a mission of his own, and Frances was left in the position of the mouse when the cat is away.

King James was still following the chimera of the Spanish marriage, but as he never seemed able to catch it up he devised a plan which he thought both ingenious and romantic. He sent his son and the Favourite in disguise from England that Prince Charles, when he arrived at the Spanish Court, might woo the Infanta in person. This ought to settle the matter once and for all—and it certainly did. They set sail in February, 1623, and as soon as they were gone King James plunged into manœuvres for the recovery of the Palatinate without going to war.

The absence of the Favourite was welcome to most people, but it was another thing for the heir to the throne to be wandering about the Continent of Europe on a wild-geese chase, and it did not meet with approval ; especially as nobody wanted the Spanish marriage but the King and the Catholics. The next heir was the Princess Elizabeth, Queen of Bohemia, and the Palatinate was proving a very broken reed. The King got cartooned all over the place—both at home and abroad. He was shown with a sword which would not leave its scabbard in spite of the numbers of people who were trying to pull it out. He was shown with no sword at all. There were pictures of him with his pockets turned inside out, and upside down, and his purse gaping empty, and pictures

## *The Lady of Bleeding Heart Yard*

of him with a cradle in his arms following his daughter dressed like a peasant woman with her child slung over her back. But for all the impression these things made on King James they might never have been printed. In the meantime to show that his affection for the Favourite was undiminished by absence he created him Duke of Buckingham. There was general disapproval at this unnecessary display of favour, though everybody was glad enough to see the Court ridded of the new Duke even if only for a time. Frances was positively delighted to have him gone. She began to be cheerful again. Sir Robert Howard began to be cheerful too. Lady Hatton countered him at once, for she discovered an urgent need to visit the Queen of Bohemia in her distress, and she crossed the sea to Holland, taking Frances with her.

They went with a party of other ladies escorted by the Earl of Essex—ex-husband of the Lady Frances Howard who was now Countess of Somerset—and the Ladies Wharton and Wallingford went with them. Lady Wallingford was the Lady Elizabeth Howard of whom mention has already been made, and whose husband was created Earl of Banbury a few years later. They embarked in one of those high-prowed, broad-sided, sailing vessels which were then in vogue, and which look so inadequate and so uncertain, and were thus conveyed to Holland. They wrote to advise Sir Dudley Carleton, who was still Ambassador at the Hague, of their arrival, telling him "that having been long under the protection of the land gods, they had recently put themselves into that of Neptune, and by him were driven upon that coast ; which, they hear, is ennobled by the possession of two excellent princes, the King and Queen of Bohemia, to whom they request an introduction."<sup>1</sup>

After this playful preliminary they appeared in person to

<sup>1</sup> GREEN, "*Lives of the Princesses of England*," vol. v, p. 409.

## *Purbeck's malady returns*

cheer the Queen of Bohemia's flagging spirits, and according to Sir Dudley Carleton they succeeded, for he wrote to General Cecil : " It gives new life to this good and gracious princess to see her old friends ; so as I am very glad when such occasions happen, which do minister some entertainment, of which (God knoweth) she hath need ; for she is otherwise full of discomfort."

While Lady Hatton and Frances were thus relieving the tedium of their exiled princess—and incidentally their own—the Viscount Purbeck was not so fortunate. For a time he had been in his normal senses, but presently came a return of his old malady, and he was placed in the custody of his sister-in-law, the newly-made Duchess of Buckingham, and of his sister, Susan, Countess of Denbigh.

It is difficult to know exactly what the Viscount Purbeck's malady really was, but it seems to have taken a form which made him conspicuous in public in ways which might injure the good report of his brother, the Duke, and so were distasteful to the King. This can only be judged by the vague references to his malady in contemporary letters, as no doctor's report appears to be forthcoming, though at one time he was said to have been in the hands of physicians for the cure of this " melancholy distemper."

It is possible that he blamed his brother and family for his matrimonial troubles, and vented his feelings on everyone who would listen to him, for he would not consent to abide by the terms of the Deed Frances had been compelled to sign, and was always running to her whenever an opportunity occurred. Certain it is that in the summer of 1623 his trouble was upon him, and by August of that year the King himself, in the absence of the Favourite, had taken the matter in hand, and was arranging for the disposal of the person of the Viscount Purbeck. He gave instructions to Sir John Hippisley to

## *The Lady of Bleeding Heart Yard*

undertake the duty of removing the poor man to a place where his "follies and disprofits" would not reflect on his noble brother. Sir Edward Conway, one of the Duke of Buckingham's faction, was entrusted with the job, and to him the Duchess of Buckingham wrote :

Sir,

My sister and myselfe have seene a letter writt from you to Sir John Keyesley [Hippisley] concerning my Brother Purbeck, by his ma'ties command and doubt not but his ma'ties hath bin informed with the most of his distemper. Wee have bin with him the moste parte of this weeke at London, and have found him very temperate by which we thinke hee is inclining towards his melancholye fitt, which if hee were in, then hee might be perswaded any wayes, which at this instant hee will not, he standeth so affected to the cittee and if there should be any violent course taken with him, wee thinke he would be much the worse, for it, and drive him quite besides himselfe. Therefore wee hould it best to intreat Sir John Keyesley [Hippisley] and som other of his friends to beare him companie in London and kepe him as private as they can for three or four dayes till his dull fitt be upon him, and then hee may bee had any whither. This in our judgment is the fittest course at this present to be taken with him which we desire you will be pleased to let his Ma'ty knowe and I shall rest.

Your assured loving friend,

K. BUCKINGHAM.

To which Sir Edward Conway made answer :

Most Gratiuous,

I have represented to his Ma'tie your Letter, and he doth graciously observe those sweete and tender motions which rise in your minde, suitable with your noble, gentle and milde disposition, in which you excell your sex : especially where force or restraint should be done to the brother of youre deare Lorde.

And I cannot expresse soe finely as his Ma'tie did, how much he priseth and loveth that blessed sweetness in you, and you in it. But I must tell your Grace his Ma'tie prays you, not to thinke it a

## *Purbeck at Hampton Court*

little distemper which carryed him to those publique actes, and publique places, and to consider how irremediable it is, when his intemperance hath carryed him to do some act of dishonour to himselfe, which may, and must, reflect upon his most noble Brother, beyond the follies and disprofits which he dayly practiseth. And that your Grace will not only bee to suffer some sure course to bee taken for the conveying of him into the country, but that you wil advise it and assist it with the most gentle (yet sure) wayes possible. That he may be restrayned from the power and possibility of doing such acts as may scorne him, or be dangerous to him : which these wayes of acting can never provide for. For his Ma'tie sayeth there cannot bee soe much as "whoe would have thought it," which is the fooles answeare, left for an error in this : for whoe would not thinke that a distempered minde may doe the worst to be done. His Ma'tie therefore once more prayes you that his former directions to Sir John Ersley may bee put in execution and the safest and surest for the goode of the unfortunate noble person, and honor of youre deare Lorde, his Ma'ties dearest servant.

This is that I have in charge. My faith and duty calls for this profession that noe man is more bound to study and endeavour the preservation of the honor and good of those that have interest in my noble patron then myselfe : nor noe man more bound and more ready to obey your commandments then

Your Grace's most humble servant

*Aldershot. 30 August 1623.*

The result of this was that somehow the Viscount Purbeck was persuaded to accompany Sir John Hippisley out of town. Perhaps it was represented to him that, as it was the King's wish that he should leave London, he could not very well refuse. But he went no further than Hampton Court, and from there Sir John Hippisley wrote to Sir Edward Conway, who was still acting for the King :

Noble Sir,

I have received the King's command and your directions in your letters to bring my Lord of Purbecke out of London which I

## *The Lady of Bleeding Heart Yard*

have done and have made no noise of it and have done all I could to give no scandal to the Duke or Viscount : He is now at Hampton Court, but is not willing to go any further till the king send express commande that he shall not staye here.

Sir I have obeyed all the King's commandes and that without any scandal to the Duke, now my humble request to you is that I may be free from entering any farther in this business and that I may come and kiss his Maj'tes hand for now I am fit. . . . There is one Mr. Aimes that knoweth my Lord of Purbecke and fitte to be employed by rate he hath power to persuade him. I beseech you grant me fair of this and you shall have it me.

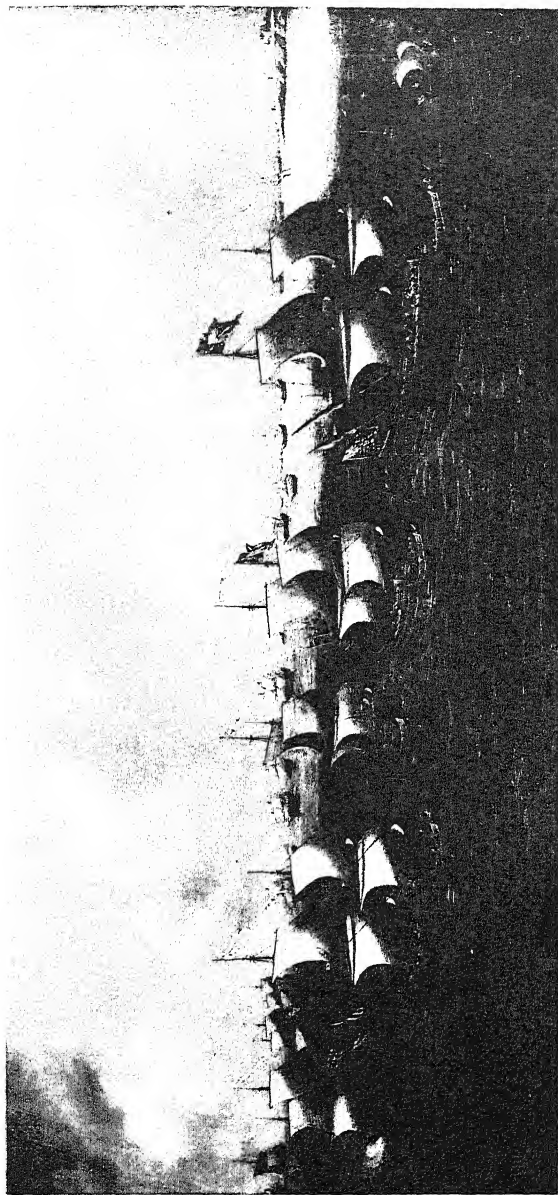
To be your faithfull servant ever to be commanded,  
*JO : HIPPISELY.*

*Hampton Court  
this 2 of September.*

King James evidently thought Hampton Court an unsuitable place for the Viscount Purbeck, for soon afterwards he himself wrote to him recommending the Earl of Middlesex as a competent bear-leader and inviting the Viscount Purbeck to go whithersoever the Earl of Middlesex might take him. By the time Prince Charles and the Duke of Buckingham returned home in October—having marred instead of made the Spanish marriage—the Viscount Purbeck was well out of the way.

But the tales about Frances with which they were greeted by the Countess of Buckingham, the Countess of Denbigh, and other members of the family, backed by reports from the various sleuths they had employed to collect them, nearly threw the Duke of Buckingham himself into a frenzy. Without waiting for what any reasonable person would consider proof of guilt, the Duke of Buckingham and his mother wanted Frances to suffer a public trial, a public punishment, and any other form of ordeal that could be devised.

By this time Frances and her mother had returned from



PRINCE CHARLES NEARING PORTSMOUTH ON HIS RETURN FROM SPAIN ON OCTOBER 5TH, 1623

By Vroom, from Hampton Court Palace

*By gracious permission of His Majesty the King*





## *The law of "the four seas"*

the Hague, and it has to be admitted that Lady Hatton's admonitions in the matter of decorum had grown irksome to Frances, and she had not been behaving with that strict regard for discretion which in the circumstances was considered so necessary. She had been seeing far too much of Sir Robert Howard, and they had been enjoying "entertainments, meetings, and conferences together"; but in spite of the care Frances had taken to keep these parties secret the Countess of Buckingham knew all about them.

The consequences were as bad as they could be. The Villiers family called on the Lord Keeper, Williams, Bishop of Lincoln, to give them the benefit of his assistance, and as he was a friend of the Duke's he gave it at once. They also enlisted the sympathies of other prelates and friends of the Favourite, men who could be relied on to judge as he wished them to judge because they owed their positions to his influence.

The Duke of Buckingham heaped every indignity he could think of on his sister-in-law, and as for Sir Robert Howard, he would gladly have seen him suffer every torture of the Inquisition. Hanging was too good for him. It was not outraged virtue that prompted the Duke of Buckingham thus to protect his brother's interests—except in so far as it was a family affair in which his standards of virtue differed from those he applied to himself. It was partly hatred of Frances and the Howard family and his desire for revenge, and partly because any child of the Viscount Purbeck and his wife would inherit the titles and estate of the Duke of Buckingham, now or in the future, should his own heirs fail. And it was this that might be in dispute.

In those days the law held that a child born in wedlock was deemed to be the husband's child if he was in the kingdom—"within the four seas" it was called—unless it could be

## *The Lady of Bleeding Heart Yard*

proved by reliable witnesses other than the husband and wife that the spouses who were the subject of the suit were either divorced, or separated in such a way that access was impossible, or that the husband could not become the father of children by reason of infirmity. It was a very difficult matter to upset the legitimacy of a child born during the coverture of a marriage even if the presumptive evidence was abundantly clear that the husband was not the father.

It was all most harassing for Frances. The Prince's house seemed to be full of spies and enemies, and she was so young that she could not always discriminate among them, which made it difficult to be sure she was trusting in the right direction. She hardly knew what to do, for even her own servants were bribed against her. Two of her footmen, Thomas Worley and Daniel Dickinson, began "not to carry themselves well towards her," and she had to discharge them, and Thomas Worley entered the service of the Viscount Purbeck and continued to spy on her.

It seemed to Frances that her only source of happiness was Sir Robert Howard, and she was ready to run any risks to see him. They went together to visit the notorious Dr. Lambe—he called himself doctor, but no one knew his degree—and a confederate named Frodsham, hoping to derive some comfort from their fortune-telling. These necromancers had taken the place of the Dr. Forman who had so opportunely died when the Overbury trials were pending.

Dr. Lambe was not a pleasant character, but he was potent. He advertised himself in subtle ways and bore a reputation which, while it was anything but respectable, had at least the advantage of being thorough. He was consulted by everyone, high and low, and might have made a fortune had not his tastes and temptations led him to squander as much as he made. Not the least of his potential sources of success lay in

## *Dr. Lambe and his mysteries*

the fact that he was a receptacle for many people's secrets. The Duke of Buckingham and his mother frequently consulted him in those delicate matters which they thought might best be referred for solution to occult powers, and he was said to have "escaped the Stroke of Justice by his Favour in Court," when he was found guilty of having broken King James I's statute regarding witchcraft, sorcery and enchantment.

It was unwise of Frances to consult such a friend of her enemies, and especially when Sir Robert Howard was with her, but she was really desperate, and Dr. Lambe had a way of conveying to his clients that he was all sympathy and assistance, and could truly exercise on their destinies a good deal of influence. Perhaps the stagecraft with which he surrounded himself had something to do with his power over the human mind. His clients belonged to a superstitious age, and thought is responsive to the eye. He laid out his *milieu* to catch the eye and hold thought, and his clients tumbled into the trap at once.

They were ushered into a room hung with curtains on all sides, so that there seemed to be neither doors nor windows nor daylight nor fresh air. The curtains were figured with signs of the Zodiac and other astrological and cabalistic hieroglyphics in which skulls and crossbones figured conspicuously. The light in the room was dim and mysterious before he got to work with his brazier, and then a red smoke rose into the air and faded among the curtains in long dull wisps until it began to grow thick, and so to throw a pall of shadows over everything. A pungent odour came from the substances he was burning—sometimes pleasant and sometimes very much the reverse—and he chanted incantations in a curiously lulling manner. He himself, as he bent over his brazier with his arms outstretched, looked a weird figure,

## *The Lady of Bleeding Heart Yard*

costumed in a tunic with long wing sleeves and covered with the same sort of hieroglyphics as appeared on the wall hangings, a wizard's hat on his head, and his necromancer's tools spread about him in a wide, surrounding circle of chalk. There were books and bones, an hour-glass, a dial, a dish or two, wax images, and other curious implements. After he had been chanting some time a kind of magic-lantern hidden behind a cloth threw grotesque and horrid shapes within an illuminated circle, but nothing was too clear in the dense, strong-smelling smoke, and quite likely Frodsham or some other confederate was manipulating the lantern from behind the curtains.

On the modern mind Dr. Lambe's mysteries do not produce much impression, and the wonder is they were so terrifying to his contemporaries ; but at a time when everybody believed there was nothing to choose between imagination and reality, that any old witch woman's pet cat or dog might be an imp in disguise, and that transmutation was an established fact, these adjuncts to the wizard's craft made a profound impression on minds untuned to see that in the sorcerer's tools lay the only sorcery.

## XII

### *A NEW ORDEAL FOR FRANCES*

THERE CAME A TIME WHEN FRANCES FOUND THAT A NEW TIDE of trouble was sweeping down on her and that if she was not to be drowned in its flood she must face the future quickly. The future looked very black indeed. Her situation was appalling. She lay night after night in the Prince's house wondering what terrors the next day would bring forth, and planning what best she could do to avert them. The Viscount Purbeck was still deranged and it was clear she could not rely on assistance from him. Yet the Viscount Purbeck was the only person whose assistance was of any avail. As the days grew into weeks she became almost ill with anxiety.

And not without reason. There were rumours. How started or when, nobody knows. But the Countess of Buckingham, who always knew everything as soon as it happened, at once determined to find out the truth of them. And that there might not be the remotest chance of error she headed this all-important mission in person.

As Frances lay in bed one night there was a sudden commotion in her room, and a glow of light, red and resinous, appeared outside her bedcurtains. With palpitating heart and resentful forebodings she heard the voice of her mother-in-law and other voices she knew too well. It seemed as though the whole of the Villiers family were in her bedchamber. In loud and peremptory tones they ordered her to rise; the hangings were drawn roughly aside to assist her in this course—

## *The Lady of Bleeding Heart Yard*

and the whole bevy of relations crowded round her. Frances refused to move, but they did not take that as final. She was "barbarously haled out of bed and Sir Edward Villiers knight being one of the company most unhumanely held her by force," while there was much talk, argument, and expostulation, mingled with threats of bringing in midwives to see her.

Frances was in an agony of mind, and her only desire was to get rid of these unwelcome visitors. When at last they left her she did not give them a second chance to bear down on her. Abandoning whatever plans she had been considering for the future, and giving out a plausible story to account for her absence, she disappeared as quickly as she could. In her agitation she took a step which was undoubtedly misguided. She called herself Mistress Wright in her new lodgings; and when her baby was born she called him Robert Wright. Yet she maintained stoutly that he was the son of the Viscount Purbeck.

Since the separation that had been forced on them by the Villiers family she and her husband had, according to her story, "had the happiness afterwards to meet together yet was the same concealed as much as might be to avoid the Danger and Prejudice which she should have sustained by the discovery thereof." There was undoubtedly a certain amount of truth in this. She could not appear to be encouraging the attentions of her husband because of that Deed under which, if they met together from the date of its execution, she would lay herself open to be rendered destitute, but nobody could prevent the Viscount Purbeck from running to her when he was in his right mind, and there is every reason to believe that they both lived in the Prince's house whenever this happened. At other times he was under the direct

## *Frances as Mistress Wright*

supervision of his family keepers and could be kept away from Frances.

With the Viscount Purbeck a cipher, his family her mortal enemies, and what should have been the happiest event of her life shrouded in secrecy, Frances could not expect her seclusion as Mistress Wright to be fraught with anything but apprehension and trouble. Yet it held some of the sweetest moments she had ever known. Though the circumstances surrounding the birth of her son could hardly have been sadder, they could not rob her of the joy of him. He was the treasure of her heart, the mainspring of all her future actions.

How Lady Hatton reacted to the arrival of her grandson is uncertain. It is not known at what period she knew anything about him. Whenever it may have been Frances told her the same story that she told everyone else. She accounted for her sudden flight and concealment under a false name, by enlarging on the latest hard usage she had received from the Villiers family. She was, of course, in an intolerable position, especially in as much as the mental condition of the Viscount Purbeck made corroboration of her story hopeless, and even had he been in his right mind he was not a reliable witness, and nobody who mattered placed the least credit in what he said. All the same this was no reason for calling the boy Robert nor for hiding his birth not only from her husband's family but from everybody else as well. Yet though Frances hid herself, and went to the trouble of calling herself Mistress Wright, it was not long before the Countess of Buckingham found out where she was, and then further concealment was useless.

It is impossible to describe the state of mind the Countess of Buckingham was in at this turn of events. She disowned the boy completely. He was no grandson of hers. She



## *The Lady of Bleeding Heart Yard*

urged her sons to action with all the energy at her command. She complained to the King. She renewed her efforts in the direction of "informers"; and, as she had not been very successful before, she tried new ones, enlisting the co-operation of Dr. Lambe and his confederate Frodsham.

This combination of circumstances held possibilities, and Dr. Lambe was quite equal to all they might contain; but as there is nothing to prove that Frances had ever confided in him, he was unable to be of as much assistance to the Countess of Buckingham and her son, the Duke, as they could have wished. His imagination, however, was equal to the occasion. When pressed to reveal what he knew he hinted darkly that the lady Viscountess Purbeck had bewitched her husband, and was considering setting about a course to bewitch His Grace the Duke himself under the able assistance of the mysterious Frodsham. The Duke of Buckingham made a note of this, and put down the names of Dr. Lambe and Frodsham as witnesses for the prosecution; and, determined in his own mind to bring a suit of divorce against Frances, passed on the information to the Attorney-General and to the Solicitor-General, who took it more seriously than their modern representatives would feel inclined to do.

These things soon came to Lady Hatton's ears, and she was immediately in action. Where she lived just then is not certain, for Hatton House was still let, but it may have been at Britain's Burse. There is a letter written by Mr. John Chamberlain to Sir Dudley Carleton and dated December 20th, 1623, in which he says: "Lady Hatton is said to have bought Britain's Burse for £6000, and means to make the upper part her dwelling-house; the lower part lets for £320 a year."

Lady Hatton upheld her daughter. She denounced the

## *Lady Hatton visits lawyers*

Favourite and everybody belonging to him. She had plenty to say to Frances about folly and impropriety and not taking wholesome advice, and as she was a lady with a fine gift of oratory, the opportunity to give Frances the benefit of it was certainly not missed. But that done she marshalled her forces to clear her daughter of all that had been said against her, and hurried off to interview lawyers with the utmost expedition.

Day after day she worked in her daughter's cause, and night after night lay in her lonely bedchamber planning what further could be done. She was even inspired to hasten down to Stoke Poges to see what Sir Edward Coke could do for Frances—which is proof enough that her love for her daughter went deeper than anything else she could feel, and transcended all thoughts either of pride or self. With these emotions she drove through the well-known park, approached the great Tudor house, and entered the presence of the stern, unyielding man who, in spite of mutual antagonism, she knew to be the person best able to assist their daughter in her extremity.

But Sir Edward Coke was one of those fathers—they are none too rare—who, having landed their children in trouble, wash their hands of all responsibility, and leave them to worry their way out of it as best they may. He would scarcely listen to what Lady Hatton had to say. He refused either to brief the cause or to advise on it. He accepted no liability whatever for anything Frances had done or left undone, and just as he had turned her over to the Villiers family when he married her into it, so he turned her over to public justice now, and to any consequences that might ensue. If she was innocent it would be proved, and if she was not she must suffer her punishment. It had nothing to do with him.

Lady Hatton came away from Stoke Poges with the King's

## *The Lady of Bleeding Heart Yard*

words in her heart : “ He is the fittest instrument for a tyrant that ever was in England.”

If the truth must be told Sir Edward Coke had patched up a peace with the Duke of Buckingham, and had no intention of appearing against him in a suit he had so much at heart. Moreover, a new Parliament had been called and Sir Edward Coke was returned for Coventry. He could not allow anything to interfere with patriotism. Incidentally he did some useful work in the new Parliament, for he carried the Act abolishing monopolies, and secured to inventors the reward of their labours by grant of patents. And as the Duke of Buckingham had quarrelled with the Earl of Middlesex—the same Earl of Middlesex who a few months before had found a retreat for the Viscount Purbeck—Sir Edward Coke conducted that gentleman’s well-deserved impeachment. His reconciliation with the Duke of Buckingham, however, was of short duration, and the Parliamentary session ceased in May, 1624, but both the reconciliation and the session lasted long enough to keep the great lawyer away from his daughter’s cause, and it is quite likely that the Duke of Buckingham had patched up the peace on purpose.

Sir Edward Coke went back to his books at Stoke Poges, and kept out of the fray. But Lady Hatton was in the thick of it. There is a hint that she encountered some trouble with the lawyers. To oppose the Duke of Buckingham was a very delicate matter, and could only be ventured if the issue was sure of success. Was Lady Hatton sure of success ? This, of course, was a subtle way of hinting that the lawyers were not. But she vehemently protested her faith. Let them put the case to the test. And it was manifestly abominable that the Duke of Buckingham could have the best advice at his command, while her daughter could find no one to shield her. In the end money rather

## *Frances and Howard accused*

than merit secured counsel for the defence, and the lawyers chanced it.

Frances and Sir Robert Howard were cited to appear in the Spiritual Court at Lambeth. It was not the Viscount Purbeck, however, who was anxious to get rid of his wife. The accusers were the Duke of Buckingham and the Countess his mother.

### XIII

#### LETTERS AND A LAWSUIT

*To His Grace The Duke of Buckingham From  
Thomas Coventry Attorney General and  
Robert Heath Solicitor General*

24th February 1624

Most noble lord,

Wee have synce o'r last l'tres to yo'r Grace attended lord chief Iustice sev'rall daies for further exhamminacons of the busines of yo'r brother the lord Purbeck in wch wee have gained some good p'ofe more then before to give satysfaction that the child was not begotten by the lord Purbeck a'd as the lord chief Iustice and wee do hold the p'ofe layd together to be strong and violent against S'r Rbt Howard though wee cannot yet gaine any expr'sse confession from p'ties or testimony of witnesses that can directly pr've him guilty. . . . But all being layd together wee hold the cause ready and ripe for a p'ceeding in the ecclesiasticall court yt yo'r grace shall so direct and as much light gained for a p'ceeding in p'llm't as wee can probably expect.

Concerning the poynt of sorcery wee do not concieve the prooffe such that wee can conclude any sorcery to be acted either by Lambe or Frodsham against yo'r grace or the lord Purbeck but that the lady Purbeck did resort often to Lambe is most manifest and wee v'rly thinke with evill intention to yo'r brother, and that S'r Rbt. Howard went often wth her is equally clear but that his intention was to have any sorcery used is not so playne ; so as wee thinke the use to be made of this p't of the busines will be rather to aggravate and make odious the other p't of the offenses then to p'ceed upon it as a distinct cryme of it self more because nothing yet app'es that should cause us to thinke the matter capitall against any of the delinquents and because there remayne no other to be exhammined save only one woman who cannot yet be b'ound and

## *A question of bail*

because the offend'rs are by lawe baylable and the Erle of Suffolke hath synce his message sent att first written a violent letter to the lord chief Iustice pressing the baylement of his sonne as being baylable by law the lord chief Iustice hath entered into considerations about bayling of him and some of the rest. But wee have moved him to respecte it untill wee myght adv'se yo'r grace, though after a full exhamminacion of the cause and as much brought to lyght as either in our owne Iudgement or by any thing wee can learn from those that follow the busines is like to be effected though they should be longer kept close wee see no fruit of holding them in prison. And when theyr imprisonment is but fruitless theyr baylement may give the world satysfaction. And so praying your grace direction wee rest

yo'r graces most humble and bounden servants

THOMAS COVENTRYE  
RO HEATH

*Sergeants Inn*<sup>1</sup>

24 febr 1624

By which letter it would seem that the Duke of Buckingham had already succeeded in obtaining the commitment of Sir Robert Howard to prison, or at any rate a considerable threat of such a course.

A fortnight later the case against Frances and Sir Robert Howard had gone a step further, and the Lord Keeper Williams was writing to the Duke of Buckingham to tell him how his wishes were being respected. His Grace was with the King—who was ill—and somewhat fretful that he could not be following the case on the spot :

*The Lord Keeper Williams Bishop of Lincoln  
to His Grace The Duke Of Buckingham*

10 11th March  
1624

May it please Your Grace

Sir Robért Howard appeared yesterday, and continues obstinate in his refusal to swear. When we came to examine

<sup>1</sup> *Tanner M.S. 73 ; 514 (Bodleian) original.*

## *The Lady of Bleeding Heart Yard*

the Commission for our Power to fine him for this obstinacie, we found that Sir Edward Cook (preseeing out of a propheticall how near it might concern a Grandchild of his owne some day) hath expunged this Clause (by the help of the Earle of Salisburie) out of the Commission, and left us nothing but the rusty Sword of the Church, Excommunication, to vindicate the Authority of this Court. We have given him day until Saturday next, either to conform or to be excommunicated. She [Lady Purbeck] hath answered witlee and cunninglie, but yet sufficient for the Cognizance of the Court ; confesseth a Fame of Incontinencie against her and Howard, but sayeth it was raised by her Husband's Kindred. I do not doubt but the Business will go on well, but (peradventure) more slowly if Howard continue refractory, for want of this Power to Fine and Amerce him. I beseech your Grace either to procure me the Favour to come, or to excuse my not seeing His Majestie in this time of his Indisposition, which I hear still continueth. I beseeche Almighty God (as in Eternal Duty I am bound) presentlie to ease him, and restore him to perfect Health.

*From The Same To The Same*

12 13 March

May it please Your Grace

1624

For Your Brother's Businesse, this is all I have to acquaint Your Grace withal. Sir Robert Howard appeared yesterday at Lambeth, pretended want of Councel (the Doctors being out of Town) desired respite until tomorrow, and had it granted by my Lord's Grace. Most men think he will not take this Oath at all ; I do incline to the contrarie opinion, because (to my Knowledge) he hath sent far and near for the most able Doctors in the Kingdom to be feed for him, which were great follie if he intended not to answer. He is extreemly commended for his closeness and secresie by the major part of our Auditors (the Hee and Shee Goodfellows of the Town) and tho' hee refuseth to be a Confessor yet is sure to die a Martyr, and most of the Ladies in Town will offer at his Shryne. The Ladie Hatton, some nine days since, was at Stoke with the good Knight her Husband, for some Counsel in this particular. But he refused to meddle therewithal, and dismisst

## *A feminine contract*

her Ladieship when she had stayed with him verie lovinglie half a quarter of an hour.

*From The Same To The Same*

22nd March

1624

May it please Your Grace

. . . Your Grace hath revived my Lord of Clare, sithence I spake with your Grace ; and I beseeche Your Grace to follow that Resolution, and to let Mr. Packer draw up a Warrant, signed by the King, to mee, to place him with the rest in the Council of war. It will be an occasion to take up more of that time which he now spends with the Ladie Hatton. For now I am resolved that I was right in my conjecture to Your Grace, and his Lordship hath utterly refused my Ladie Purbeck's Cause (of which the verie common people begin to be ashamed) but is deeply engaged against my Ladie of Richmond in the businesse of that famous foeminine Contract, and bargain of sixteen hundred pounds by the year for a House to sleep in.

The very common people were, however, far from being ashamed of my Lady Purbeck's cause, and this remark was only the flattery of the Lord Keeper for the Duke of Buckingham, with whom he soon afterwards fell out, and then nothing was bad enough for him. But what he said about the Duchess of Richmond was true enough.

While Lady Hatton was interviewing lawyers and bringing all the power both of her wit and her wealth to help her daughter, she was engaged in a suit on her own account. In 1623 or 1624 the Duke of Lenox and Richmond died suddenly at Whitehall, and was "laid in state for six weeks at Hatton House and all things performed with much solemnity for him," before he was buried at Westminster, and thereafter his widow had wished to continue the lease of the house from Lady Hatton, who had agreed to it on certain terms,



## *The Lady of Bleeding Heart Yard*

which were the occasion of continual friction, until the Duchess of Richmond could stand it no longer.

The contest had already begun at the period of Lady Purbeck's trial, and added considerably to Lady Hatton's trouble of mind, but she let nothing deter her from anything she had decided to do, and when the time came for Frances to appear before the Spiritual Court at Lambeth she was ready with all the moral support her presence could supply.

Down went the rival litigants to Lambeth—then a marshy swamp where wild-fowl nested, and the King found game to hunt, and where the palace of the Archbishop of Canterbury stood in somewhat lonely splendour beside the Thames. In solemn conclave the bishops and judges were assembled. Both within and without the court-room a great congress of people had gathered, for the case had excited wide interest, and popular sympathy was with Frances and Sir Robert Howard.

As soon as the proceedings began Sir Robert Howard refused to take the oath. He said he was excused by his Privilege of Parliament. This caused unpleasantness at once.

The Duke of Buckingham "instigated by his Mother to revenge the Injury done to his Brother, he was fully bent to crush [Sir Robert Howard]. The Crime he most bitterly urged against him, and besides the usual Judges delegated some of the Bishops, of which many had been preferred by him, and so were at his Devotion, to be Assessors to them. The guilty Parties were cited to appear : the Accusors or Plaintiffs called the Viscountess and Rob: Howard, a young man of great Quality, into the Spiritual Court, and most criminally prosecuted them at Lambeth, where they were treated with Reproaches and Invectives. They denied the Crime, and the Lady being of an high and vehement Spirit testified with great Freedom, and very openly complained, that she had been

## *The trial begins*

treated in a very cruel Manner, deprived of the Comfort of her Husband's Company, loaded with the Imputation of Infidelity, her Subsistence taken from her, and tho' endowed with a very great Fortune, was reduced to such Necessity as hardly to have wherewith to buy herself Cloaths. The Standersby were so much the more moved at her Distress, in that she had been married quite against her Consent, to a Man disordered in his Senses, and the Crime of Infidelity urged against her. The Tryal began, and the Oath ex-officio, by the Iudges was tendered to both of them. He utterly refused to take it, saying that he was excused by his Privilege of Parliament ; he was then Burgess for Bishops Castle in Shropshire. But this Authority, how great soever was not allowed, and he was thrown into Prison, and severely treated for his Contumacy. The Lady was also in the same Sentiments, and with Fear and Anxiety of Mind made Answer, That no one was obliged to accuse themselves, that the Burthen of Proof lay upon the Accusers, and till that was done, the Proceedings must be stopt. The Iudges however insist, and with great Appearance of Solemnity declare, that the Oath imposed by the Laws and Customs of the Realm was not to be refused ; nor could there be any Immorality for an innocent Person to take it. The Lady upon this, with bitter Revilings, calls upon the Prelates, that they would make their own Wives set the good Example, by swearing that they were free from all Faults, by which Exemple her Scruples might be removed. In short persevering in this Manner to refuse the Oath, and denying the Crime, she was threatened with Excommunication, and the Ecclesiastical Laws were executed with the utmost Severity. Howard, a noble Youth, was publicly excommunicated at Paul's Cross, that the Deformity of his Disgrace might spread the wider ; and then the Viscountess was served in the same Manner, condemned, and

## *The Lady of Bleeding Heart Yard*

excommunicated for her contumacious Behaviour. Thus condemned, they were shut up in Prison, to the great Grief of their Parents and Relations. The Iudges now thought they had discharged their Duties, and gratified the Will of him who employed them to take Cognizance of the Affair.”<sup>1</sup>

This author is stated to have been at times an eye-witness of the matters of which he writes, and therefore “ must be in this fact fully credited.”

The proceedings in the Ecclesiastical Court, followed by the imprisonment and excommunication of Frances, threw Lady Hatton into a fever of indignation, and she denounced the whole Villiers family louder than ever. She rushed round among her relations airing her woes and expecting assistance. She visited her lawyers. She bore down on the King. Unfortunately the Duke of Buckingham had the King’s ear and it was some little time before Lady Hatton had won His Majesty round.

The Earl of Suffolk was no less active in agitating for the release of the prisoners, and added his lamentations to those of Lady Hatton. In the end the King gave way. Frances and Sir Robert Howard were allowed to prepare a petition, which duly went to His Majesty for consideration. In this they reasserted their innocence, and complained that “ the Clemency and Mildness of his most gentle Government was now converted into Severity and Cruelty that they were condemned for no Crime ; nor did they conceal by whose unbounded Fury it was owing, that innocent Persons had undergone so great Dangers.”

King James really did not know what to think. Everybody was so positive on one side or the other, and both sides could not be right. He was still ill, suffering from a tertian ague, and did not want to be worried about it all. He was, however,

<sup>1</sup> R. JOHNSTON, “ *Scoto Britannus*,” anno 1624. ADD. MS. 5834.

## *A hitch in the proceedings*

prevailed on to consent to the release of the prisoners, though they were not to be considered completely discharged. His Majesty ordered : " That the Laws should be put in Force, charging the Delegates and Bishops, to try them with the strictest Integrity at the Common Law, without paying any regard to Favour or Application : and that if they were found innocent, to protect them from the Danger that hung over them, but if Guilty of the Fact, that they should punish them according to Law."<sup>1</sup>

Whereupon the Duke of Buckingham set about making ready another trial, and Frances and Sir Robert Howard prepared to meet it.

Then there was a hitch in the proceedings. The Viscount Purbeck recovered his reason. This interfered with the plans of his mother and brother. They had decided to sue for a divorce, but while the Viscount Purbeck was in his right mind they could not bring the case as his guardians, and he was by no means prepared to bring it himself. As a Papist he could not tolerate divorce and besides he was not in the least anxious to be rid of his wife. In spite of all the trouble there had been and the further trouble that was brewing he persisted in running to Frances, and as he was able to be at Court and she was out of prison, it was obvious that the Duke of Buckingham's case could not make much headway.

This state of things lasted only for a time. By July of the same year the Viscount Purbeck was again deranged. Mr. John Chamberlain mentions it to Sir Dudley Carleton in a letter dated July 24th, 1624 :

My Verie Sweete Lord :

. . . The Viscount Purbeck followed the Court a good while in verie goode temper, and there was speech of making him a

<sup>1</sup> R. *Johnston ante*.

## *The Lady of Bleeding Heart Yard*

marquis that he might go before his yonger brother but I heare of late he is fallen backe to his old craise and worse. . . .

Yo'r Lo'ps most assuredly  
at command

JOHN CHAMBERLAIN.

Three months later Frances had her son christened at Cripplegate. The ceremony took place on October 20th, 1624, in the Garden House of a Mr. Manning at the upper end of White Cross Street, and the name given to the child was Robert Wright.

The reasons for this are not plain, nor why Frances should have chosen Cripplegate for her son's christening. It was not an unpleasant place in 1624. It had fair houses with gardens on the banks of the Town Ditch, which was what was left of the moat that used to lie round London Wall. A good deal of London Wall remained, twenty feet high and nine to twelve feet thick, with towers at intervals and massive gates and posterns. There was a postern at Cripplegate—hence its name. There were almshouses also, and cottages and wells, and a spring in the graveyard—not the healthiest place for it—and the Church of St. Giles was comparatively new because much of the old one had been consumed by fire in 1545. Inside the Walls were narrow streets and alleys cobbled below and almost enclosed above so much did the upper storeys of the houses overhang the lower. The Garden House of Mr. Manning has long since gone, and White Cross Street has been rebuilt and again rebuilt, but the Church of St. Giles remains.

It was a mild October, mild and very fine—a good year for quinces. The summer had been exceptionally warm and crops were abundant. An outbreak of spotted fever—described as cousin german to the plague—had broken out

## *Frances so ill of smallpox*

during the hot weather, and a great many people had died of it. Among these was a daughter of Alice, Lady Hatton. Two or three of her other children were ill with the disease at her brother Fanshawe's house in Essex, and there is reason to think that Alice, Lady Hatton may have succumbed to it also, for she certainly died about that time, leaving her children orphans. Besides, there was a great deal of smallpox in London, which spread with alarming rapidity, and attacked people weakened by other diseases and the drastic remedies used to combat them. Frances, to add to her other troubles, caught it, and in December was very ill indeed.

It was useless for the Duke of Buckingham to try to keep his brother from her. The Viscount Purbeck would not hear of it. On December 20th Mr. John Chamberlain was writing to Sir Dudley Carleton that "the Lady Purbeck is ill of the smallpox, and her husband is so kind that he stirs not from her bed's feet."

The Viscount Purbeck probably had good reasons for watching over his wife while she lay ill. What with Sir Robert Howard on the one hand, whose anxiety for her safety might make him reckless, and the Duke of Buckingham on the other, who might be tempted to do away with her altogether, the Viscount Purbeck was taking no risks. Hour after hour he sat watching her, as she fought the dread disease that might rob her of her life, or loveliness, or both, too weak to help herself, or even to be conscious of what was passing.

Garlands were hung on her walls—garlands of green stuff to ward away infection. Pomanders for the same purpose were placed here and there. The atmosphere of the room was heavy with the scent of herbs and pungent remedies. Sponges soaked in vinegar were used upon the patient, and to disinfect her attendants. The fire that burnt day and night on the

## *The Lady of Bleeding Heart Yard*

hearth was laden with the odour of dried mint and thyme, and rosemary and rue. Bunches of crushed sage were suspended overhead. There was a terrible lack of fresh air, and the wonder was that in such surroundings Frances made so good a recovery. It was probably Dr. Theodore Mayerne, the King's physician, the man who held nearly all the Court secrets concealed behind his gruff exterior, who cured her in the end, or assisted youth and a healthy nature in the task for which he got the credit ; but the Viscount Purbeck did his share.

It was by no means pleasing to his brother. The Duke of Buckingham was only waiting for Frances to be well enough to bring her up again for trial. Early in January he was busy preparing his case, and on February 13th he was writing to the Lord Chief Justice begging that she might be " removed from the Prince's House which is defiled by her presence, and where by her subtilty she still works on her husband, to some fitting prison, the King having ceased to wish her treating with respect : also that Sir Robert Howard be removed from custody of an alderman and sent to prison." Sir Robert Howard's concern for the welfare of Frances had only led him into custody.

The King had a musician, by name Innocent Lanier, with whom the Viscount Purbeck was friendly, and who lived in the Prince's house. The Duke of Buckingham overcame any scruples which Innocent Lanier may have had on the subject of loyalty, and persuaded him to act as sleuth in the affairs of the Viscount and Viscountess Purbeck, and to report to him the results—but, of course, without letting them know of this new and somewhat unusual duty of a king's musician.

He introduced Innocent Lanier to the Lord Chief Justice in a letter dated February 11th :

## *Mr. Innocent Lanier*

I have moved the P [Prince] for a warrant from his ma'tie for the commitment of Sir Ro. Howard and my sister Purbeck, but his ma'tie hath out of his gracious and provident care of mee dissuaded mee in this lest upon it coming to a publike hearing it might be thought that I had gained power more by way of favour then by the wayes of Iustice. . . .

I desier you to acquaint theis bearer Mr. Innocent Lanier all the particulars of this matter for I know him to be verie honest, and discrete and secrete. . . .

Lanier is much trusted by my Brother Purbecke ; . . .

Lanier will not otherwise be able to keep my Brother with him ; and if he leaves, Sir Robert Howard and my Sister Purbecke by their crafty Insinuations will draw from him Speeches to their advantage.

Part of this letter is illegible, but enough can be read to follow the trend of the Duke of Buckingham's mind.

On February 15th he wrote to the Lord Chief Justice again :

My Lord

I understande you are not yet resolved to committ my Sister Purbecke who (if shee bee att Libertie) will bee still plotting and devising with her Ill Counsellors to cover and conceal the Truth and Fowlness of her Crime and my Brother will bee every Daie running to her and give her Occasion to worke on him by the Subtlty of her Discourse. It is known that His Ma'tie was tender (at first mention of this busines) of the Hande of a Ladie of her Qualitie but sure he hath fully understoode the Proofs and Truth of her Faulte and how dishonourably she hath carryed her selfe hee would have no more Support shoven to her then to an ordinary Ladie in the like Case for that shee hath by her Ill Carriage forfeyed that Hande.

It is likewise verie unfitt shee should remayne in the Prince's House for defying which I thinke much aggravates her Crimes and his Highnes often speakes in distast of her continuance there. You are well acquainted with the Proof which is agaynst her, so as I



## *The Lady of Bleeding Heart Yard*

shall not nede to tell you how much it reminds mee to bee carefull in the Prosecution of her Faulte but I assuer you there is nothing that more sollisitts my Mynd. I . . . thanke you for the Paynes you have always taken in this Busines, which my earnest desier is to have to bee fully discovered and that you will for much oblige mee by the continuance of the Care and Diligence therein as that shee may bee tymely prevented in her cunning Endeavours to hinder the Discovery of the Facts whereof shee stands iustly accused which (in my openyon) canot bee done but by her present Commitment.

And, Sir, I rest

Your verie loving Frend

Upon syght of the Pregnancy of the Proofes and the Giltines of Sir Rob. Howard and my Sister, I desier that you will committ them to Prison with little Respect, from where I hear Sir Rob. Howard is, for an Alderman's House is rather a Place of Entertainment to him than a Prison.

*His Grace The Duke of Buckingham to  
Thomas Coventry Attorney General*

16th February

1625

I percieve by the Paper I have recieved how much I am behold-  
ing to you and do also understand by Innocent Lanier and  
others of the Paynes and my lo. Chief Iustice, have taken in  
the Busines concerning the Ladie Purbecke for which I thank  
you. . . .

. . . but I did hope that you would have some more discovered  
by this time. If Lambe and Frodsham may escape the one by  
saying what he did was by jugglinge and the other by seeming to  
affect to be thought a juggler I believe all that hath been already  
discovered of the Truth of this Busines will be deluded. I do  
therefore desier that you will take some sound course with them to  
make them speake more directly and truly to the point and to . . .  
them from their shifts, for Lambe hath hitherto by such meanes  
played mock with the World to preserve himself. I desier you to

## *His Grace begins his case*

acquaint Innocent Lanier (who is appoynted by my Brother to sollisitt this Busines) with all the Particulars and Publique Speeche that he may the better know how to imploy this Paynes for the discovering of the Knot of this Villany. I desier you to say well what is fitt to be done in the Divorce of my Brother and to notify mee your Openyons thereon and (if you thinke it fitt to bee pursued in this) what is the speediest Work that maie bee taken therein. And you discover the best serving Frend.

I rest

*Newmarket.*

*His Grace the Duke of Buckingham to  
Mr. Solicitor General Heath*

*16th February 1625*

I have written a Letter to yourself and Mr Attorney concerning the Busines of the Lady Purbecke which I desire you on whose Love to mee I principally rely to aggravate and ayre the Crimes of that Lady and her Dealings with Lambe and the like, so soon as yet she may bee before my coming to London committed to some Prison for otherwise my Brother who hopes to bee going hence, will not bee kept from her and she will (if hee should come to her) so worke on him by her subtilty as that she will draw from him something to the advantage of her dishonourable ends and to his Prejudice. Iff ffrodsham and Lambe once feele or bee brought to feare their punishment I believe they will unfold much more then they yet have, for it seems they have but boath sported in their Examinations.

The other letter to which the Duke of Buckingham refers is probably the following :

I have written a Letter to yourself and to Mr. Attorney regarding the Busines of the Ladie Purbecke showing that I desire you principally only to aggravate her Crimes that the Ladie by my humble and your like kind Favour may yet bee kept in prison, before the retourne to Towne, for other my Brother who hopes to bee going sounne will not be kept from her and she will (if hee should meet

## *The Lady of Bleeding Heart Yard*

with her) so worke on him by her subtilty and that shee will draw from him something to the advantage of her dishonourable cause and to her end.

*Innocent Lanier to*

*His Grace the Duke of Buckingham.*

May it please your grace,

Appon my returne to London, I presently repayed to my Lo: Chiefe Justice, where I found Mr. Attorney and Mr. Solicitor. . . . I have heer inclosed fore your Grace ther letter which before it was sealed they showed mee, being something contrary to their resolution last nyghte, w'ch was, to have sent for Sr. Ro: Howard this morning, and so to comitt him closs in the Fleett, but of this I presume ther letter wil give yor. Grace such satisfaction that I shall need neither to write more of it, nor of what is yett past. They much desier yor. Grace' su coming to towne wch I hope wilbe speedy as it wilbe materiall. I finde them resolved to deale roundly in this Busnes as yor. Grace desiers and are this morning in the examination of divers witness the better to Inform themselves agaynst my Ladies coming this afternoone. The next Day, they Intend to fall uppon Lambe and Frodsham. My Lady uppon the receipt of my lo: Chiefe Justice letter is something dismayed but resolved to prove a new lodging, and new keepers. The Childe and Nurse, must remayne with us till farther directions, having nothing more at this present to aquaynt yor. Grace of, with my humblest duty, I take leave.

Yor. Grace's most humble and  
obedient Servant,

[Signed] *I. LANIER.*

*Denmark House.*

*February 19th 1625.*

*Enclosed.*

*Mr Attorney General Coventry and Mr Solicitor General Heath to  
His Grace the Duke of Buckingham*

Have consulted with Sir Henry Martin on Ladie Purbeckes Busines, and think the best Plan would be to have the Case brought before the High Commission Court, which can sit without delay, in the

## *Illness of King James I*

Vacation, and when the Crime is proved there, the Divorce can be obtained by ordinary Law. Think it unadvisable to send the Culprits to Prison, as it is unusual for Persons of their Rank, but advise that they may be confined in the Houses of Aldermen, where in fact they would be probably more closely restrained than in Prison.

(These letters have been taken from copies and the spelling is probably not quite the same in the originals.)

The Duke of Buckingham did not approve of aldermen's houses for Sir Robert Howard and his sister-in-law. He wanted them punished with the utmost severity and strongly advocated the Fleet.

He had yet to get them committed. By the end of February he had succeeded in securing the King's signature to a warrant but it had been obtained with difficulty. His Majesty was averse to divorcing a man who did not want to be divorced ; besides, he was fond of Lady Hatton and her family, and had no desire to hurt them. Also he was seriously ill—suffering from a return of his tertian ague which manifested itself in the most distressing fits, which recurred again and again with increasing violence. It was cruel to worry him with unnecessary warrants. He looked pitiful. His very countenance had changed. His beard was scaggier than ever. His colour more like mahogany. He was shaking from head to foot. He had not the power—even if he had the wish—to resist the importunities of the Duke of Buckingham, still less those of the Countess. That formidable lady was at the King's bedside, possetting him with draughts of her own recommendation, and sticking him with plasters of doubtful merit for his complaint, to the no little wrath of His Majesty's physicians. Those gentlemen could do him no good themselves, but they strongly resented the co-operation of lay healers and lay remedies.

## *The Lady of Bleeding Heart Yard*

This did not worry the Countess of Buckingham, and if she could do little to relieve the royal patient, at least she could be useful to her son. She gave the King no peace until the warrant was signed. It was among the last things James Stuart ever did. He could hardly scrawl his name—could scarcely see to write.

The King was dying.

#### XIV

### THE PLAGUE OF 1625

THE DUKE OF BUCKINGHAM WASTED NO TIME SETTING HIS warrant in motion, and Frances was very soon committed to the care of a Mr. Alderman Barkham. With her were her baby, her baby's nurse, and her other servants—though they, too, were kept in close confinement. A curious time in which to live, when a whole household might suffer imprisonment in anticipation of the trial of one member of it.

Mr. John Chamberlain duly reported the news to Sir Dudley Carleton :

*26th February 1625*

The Ladie Purbecke with her yong Sonne, and Sir Robert Howard are committed to the Custodie of Generall Aldermen Barkham and Freeman to be close kept. When shee was carryed to Sergeants Ynne to bee examined by the new Lord Chiefe Justice and Others she said she marvailed what those poor old Cuckolds had to say to her. There is an Imputation laid on her that with Powders and Potions shee did intoxicate her Husbands Braynes, and practised somewhat in that kinde upon the Duke of Buckingham. This (they say) is confest by one Lambe a notorious old Rascall that was condemned the last Sommer at the King's Bench for a Rape and arraigned some Yeare or two before at Worcester for bewitching my Lord Windsor. . . .

I see not what the Fellow can gaine by this Confession but to bee hanged the sooner. Would you thinke my Ladie Hattons Stomacke could stoupe to seeke her Lord Cooke at Stoke for his Counsaile and Assistance in this Busines :

After the signal failure of Lady Hatton's last visit to Sir

## *The Lady of Bleeding Heart Yard*

Edward Coke she was not likely to gain much by visiting him again, but it is quite possible she did so. She was finding the new developments most trying to the nerves. She was harassed from morning to night about the whole thing, and not the least unpleasant part of it was the publicity the Duke of Buckingham and his mother accorded to the problem in the hope of making matters still more disagreeable for Frances and her family.

Lady Hatton's temper suffered rather under the strain, and she vented it on the Duchess of Richmond. The aggressiveness of that childless lady and the airs she gave herself seemed to increase Lady Hatton's sense of wrong, and she haggled more than ever about the terms of the lease of Hatton House. There is a reference to their dissensions in the Calendar of State Papers 1623-5: "The Duchess of Richmond's magnificence is much talked of. She went to Chapel at Ely House with her four principal officers marching before her in velvet gowns, with white staves, three gentlemen ushers, and two ladies bearing her train, the Countesses of Bedford and Montgomery, and other ladies following in couples, etc.: but all this does not bring down the pride of the Ladie Hatton, who contests much with her about their bargains and the house."

It ended in the Duchess of Richmond throwing up the lease. By March 12th, 1625, she had vacated Hatton House and was living in Ely House only. This involved Lady Hatton in a loss of £1,500 a year—some people say £1,600 a year—but she bore it with equanimity, glad to be rid of the Duchess of Richmond at any price. Nevertheless, it was annoying to have the ostentatious lady so close to her. It was as bad as having Gondomar, and when, on the occasion of a large party at Ely House, the guests overflowed into Hatton House because there was not room enough for them

## *Death of King James I*

all next door, Lady Hatton's indignation transcended itself. She was quite capable of dealing with the situation, however, and there is nothing to show that the Duchess of Richmond's guests ever transgressed again.

On March 27th King James died at Theobalds, a palace he had exchanged with Lady Hatton's Uncle Robert for Hatfield. It was about twelve miles from London on the way to Ware. From Theobalds he was carried to Denmark House, not long after Frances had left it, and there lay in state awaiting his burial.

It was not a good augury. And there is nothing to show that Frances ever returned to the great house in the Strand which had for so long been her home, and which was soon to house the French servants of the new queen, Henriette Marie of France. King James I, disappointed that one Catholic marriage had slipped from his grasp, had promptly closed with another, and his death made no difference to his son's wish to be united to a daughter of Marie de Medici and Henry of Navarre.

What with the lying in state and the funeral of King James, and the wedding by proxy and the arrival of the bride of King Charles, the Duke of Buckingham had not much time to devote to the affairs of his sister-in-law. He was busily engaged in all the celebrations, and had to go to France to bring home the new queen. Moreover, he was indulging his vanity by falling in love with the young French queen, Anne of Austria. Before he went he gave strict orders that Frances and her husband were to be kept apart, and that she was to remain in custody.

Sir Robert Howard was removed from Mr. Alderman Freeman's house, which was an honour and entertainment too good for him, and placed instead in that "noisome place with a pestilent atmosphere," which was unhappily named the Fleet.



## *The Lady of Bleeding Heart Yard*

The river on which the Fleet was built still runs to the Thames, but whereas in those days it ran overground it is now hidden from view by pavements and a roadway. From Norman times a prison had stood on the banks of it and was only abolished in 1846. It was not always the same prison. The one in which Sir Robert Howard was confined in 1625 was burnt down in the Great Fire of London, but another was raised on the site of it to be a terror as great as the previous one had been. Later it was destroyed and rebuilt again.

In the days of Sir Robert Howard the Fleet River had become little more than a sluggish waterway known as Fleet Ditch. It was sluggish because it was half filled with offal and the rubbish that cluttered the sides of it. Periodically orders were given to cleanse the stream that barges and boats might come up to Holborn Bridge, but in a short time it was always filled again. Tenements overhung its banks—ramshackle cottages, pigsties, butchers' shambles, cook-houses, and sheds. There were several windmills. The water ran thick and greasy; dead dogs and cats floated on its surface, and the odour from it rose in a horrid effluvia and spread—noisome—from one end of the Ditch to the other.

The prison stood hard by Fleet Bridge, which connected Fleet Street with Ludgate Hill. Fleet Bridge was "of stone fair coped on either side with iron pikes, on which, towards the south be also certain lanthorns of stone for lights to be placed in the winter evenings for commodity of travellers." This is how Stow describes it. A bridge of tolls, over which no carriers could pass without payment. The prison was a forbidding, gloomy place. Its lowering walls were pierced only by narrow slits, which could scarcely be dignified by the name of windows, sunk in walls many feet thick, effectually barring the occupants of the dark, dank rooms from the benefit of what light and air these slits were able to admit.

## *The Fleet prison*

There were three wards and a vault like a burial place, where dying prisoners were brought to breathe their last, that the gaolers might have less trouble when the time came for the coroner's inquest. Overhanging the river was a massive cavernous gate through which persons from the Star Chamber, coming by water from Whitehall, passed to their cells. There was another gate, equally massive and cavernous, outside of which stood a tub in which convicts trying to escape were made to stand for public shame.

The way from Fleet Street to Holborn—Fetter Lane—was narrow, dirty, lined with houses hung at every conceivable angle, and had a gibbet at each end. Nearby was Lincoln's Inn Fields, a great space of waste ground with a scaffold on it. Someone had wanted to build a theatre there but this had not been permitted. From Holborn went the road to Tyburn and the gallows ; so that on every side were reminders of the fate of malefactors. There were compensations in rural amenities, though they carried their disadvantages as well. Hyde Park, St. John's Wood, and Marylebone were the King's hunting-grounds, in which deer were strictly preserved. They were wild tracts of land with woods and commons and patches of thick undergrowth, where robbers lurked and footpads hid—a constant menace to travellers. Beyond lay the villages of Kensington, Paddington, Kilburn and Hampstead—all a long way out with dangerous roads between, rough roads, broken by ruts and cuttings and bordered by high banks and deep ditches and haunted by highwaymen. Chelsea and Greenwich were charming little riverside resorts, and even Stepney was pleasant.

At Easter, 1625 Lady Hatton was still wrangling with the Duchess of Richmond over the aftermath of the lease of Hatton House. To Sir Edward Conway—recently made

## *The Lady of Bleeding Heart Yard*

Secretary of State—fell the task of trying to persuade the irate ladies to choose “Commissioners for accommodating their differences.” Lady Hatton had gone to Whittlesey in Cambridgeshire, where she had property, to recuperate from the effects of all her worries and troubles, and despatches were sent to her there from Whitehall. In these she was informed that the Duchess of Richmond had chosen her “Commissioners,” and who they were. The next day—April 28th—Lady Hatton received word that the King had appointed Sir John Coke, John Earl of Clare, Sir Thomas Savage, and Sir Thomas Edmondes to act as mediators in the matter.

Lady Hatton did not approve of mediators. She wanted the cause thrashed out before the Council. King Charles I in her opinion, was a young man with more power than sense. She replied by return—April 29th—that she would “ever obey His Majesty’s least commands, but is unable to attend Lord Conway, being ill of the gout. His Majesty is wrongly informed in the Cause, or he would not think it fit for an arbitration. The Duchess of Richmond must stay her (Lady Hatton’s) time of sickness.”

In June she was still at Whittlesey, so may have missed the funeral of King James I, which took place on May 7th, and was said to have been the most magnificent ever known in England. It cost the public £50,000 at a time when such a sum could be ill afforded, and from the same source “blacks” were distributed to above 9,000 persons; including the retinue of the Duke of Buckingham which swallowed up a good deal of the allowances. The funeral sermon was preached by the Lord Keeper, Bishop Williams, who never knew when to stop. He chose for his text the wisdom of Solomon and the wisdom of King James I, and it took him a couple of hours to show that the latter was the greater Solomon of the two.

## *Threat to kill or poyson*

By June 6th the Council had decided to send for Lady Hatton. She replied that "before the coming of their messengers she was prepared to take her journey to London on Whit Monday, though she had not used to travel on such days before in her life. Would attend their lordships." By that time the plague was raging in London.

While Lady Hatton was at Whittlesey Frances was at Stepney. By this it may be inferred that as soon as the Duke of Buckingham's back was turned she was released from the residence of Mr. Alderman Barkham. Stepney, then as now, was much frequented by sailormen. It was a village "out of Town," enjoying the usual delights of woods and water, clusters of timbered houses, farms and fields, with a common and a pound. It was a very large parish.

While Frances was at Stepney an incident occurred which belongs to those little details of history which, taken by themselves, are difficult of interpretation. They might mean much and they might mean little. Taken as part of the sequence of a whole they fit into their places like the pieces of a puzzle ; but in this particular instance the puzzle is incomplete, and the incident can only be related as a fragment of doubtful meaning and some mystery. An account of it is to be found among the *ADD. MSS.* (No. 38855) at the British Museum, and it is headed :

*" Articles Exhibited by the Right Hon'ble Ffrances Viscountess Purbeck against Thomas Worley and Daniell Dickinson proposed Actors to murder kill or poyson the said Viscountess, her Younge sonne or others wth her attendinge and doinge her service or some of them."*

Thomas Worley was the footman who "had not carried himself well towards the Lady Purbeck," and who, when

## *The Lady of Bleeding Heart Yard*

dismissed from her service, went to the Viscount Purbeck. He had not remained there but had passed on to the service of Sir James Osborne. For divers misconduct he had been turned off by Sir James Osborne and was now in no one's service.

Daniel Dickinson was another of the Lady Purbeck's discharged footmen. He was one of the witnesses against her collected by the Countess of Buckingham, and was now employed by one Mr. Deneare "whoe followes the Cause against the Ladie Purbecke and by him receives his meanes and mainten'ce and is again to witness against the Ladie Purbecke." There was yet another individual concerned, a servant of the Duchess of Buckingham or of the old Countess, but his name is not mentioned.

The incident appears to have begun in the week before Easter, in April, 1625, with the arrival of Thomas Worley at a barber's in the Strand. This barber was a Mr. Wells, whose daughter was nurse to Lady Purbeck's "younge sonne" Robert. Thomas Worley was not in the habit of visiting the barber, but when he came to ask for the Lady Purbeck's address, Mr. Wells unsuspectingly gave it to him. Thomas Worley then asked some very subtle questions which, after he had gone, Mr. Wells and his wife, talking the matter over together, thought suspicious.

Thomas Worley went down to Stepney, and managed to find his way into the hall of the house where Frances lived. He did not offer to speak to anyone, but walked up and down with a sword by his side, shaking his head and grinding his teeth. Lady Purbeck's gentlewoman—Mrs. Wingfield—passed through the hall while he was doing this, and not liking the look of Thomas Worley, remarked that she was a "little busy," and passed on. She went straight to Lady Purbeck's solicitor—Mr. Elwick—who happened to be in the house, and Mr. Elwick came at once to deal with him.

## *An ale-house in the Strand*

They knew, of course, in what way Thomas Worley had failed in his duty to Lady Purbeck, and all the circumstances of his dismissal both from her service and that of the Viscount Purbeck, and held the key to facts which are no longer obtainable. Mr. Elwick therefore dealt rather peremptorily with Thomas Worley, but he first asked him what he wanted.

Thomas Worley told Mr. Elwick that it had nothing to do with him, and he made an attempt to go farther up into that part of the house where Frances and her young son were, but was prevented. A sword was not a suitable assistant to conversation nor a shaking head and grinding teeth an amiable introduction to business. Mr. Elwick told him to be gone. He said he did not think the Lady Purbeck or anyone else there would speak to him. He probably did not mince matters ; and Thomas Worley, in a great fury, ran off muttering within himself that he would be revenged on Mr. Elwick. He then returned to the Strand and foregathered with Daniel Dickinson, and there, in the ale-house of a Mr. Bowler, Thomas Worley related his adventure at Stepney. He enlarged on a statement that if he could effect his purpose it would put a matter of £8 or £10 into his purse, and more than that, £30 or £40, and he would then, he said, go into France until the coronation of the King be passed, and return under a coronation pardon. He wound up his statements with a threat to stab Mr. Elwick to the heart with his dagger, or poison him—and not only Mr. Elwick but Mrs. Elwick as well—for having hindered him in his purpose with the Lady Purbeck. He professed only to want to speak with the Lady Purbeck, though he would not give any reason for wishing to do so.

At that time the Strand was quite a small place compared with its present proportions and contained far fewer houses. Mr. Bowler's ale-house was probably very well known. At

## *The Lady of Bleeding Heart Yard*

any rate Mr. Elwick found his way into it later the same night—April 22nd—and was met and told of the threats of Thomas Worley and Daniel Dickinson, and advised for his own safety to retire, which he promptly did. He may not have been seen by the two footmen who were in an upper room in the ale-house. Mr. Bowler cautioned them as to the enormity of their threats and so did the other people present.

In the evening of Monday, April 25th, Thomas Worley appeared again at the house of Mr. Wells, the barber, and asked the maidservant how he might come to a sight of Lady Purbeck at Stepney, or “by what means a man might come to deliver a note to her own hand which was matter for her own good.” He then went to Stepney again, and persuaded a man named John Young—who appears to have lived next door to the house where Lady Purbeck lay—to deliver a letter to her or to her servants, but John Young was to do this without letting them know from whom the letter came, because, said he, if they knew they might not deliver it to her ladyship. John Young duly carried out these instructions.

The letter throws little light on the real purpose of Thomas Worley’s mission if his conduct to her ladyship had been such as to make it unlikely she would give him the “entertainment” he asks to receive :

Right Hon’ble

my humble dutie & service in all humillitie remembred  
craveinge pardon for my bouldnes wch I am induced unto in  
respect I am your obliged servant being turned over from M’sre’s  
Wingfield yo’r ho’d gentlewoman to whome I was bound for  
certeyne yeares yet enduring. And I cominge to Stepney a while  
since to tender my service (whereunto I am bounde) was opposed  
by one Mr Elwick who demanded of me what I made there  
whereby I could no obteyne anne Neither unto yo’r ho’r or Mrs

## *Thomas Worley's letter*

Wingfield or understand yo'r La'p's pleasure, so that I am enforced to make tender thereof by these few lynes for that otherwise I might be condempned most ingrate, wherefore I do in all humble manner beseech to know yo'r La'p's pleasure by this bearer whether I shall receive entertaynm't or be discharged being I do chrislie acknowledge My best service & endeavours to apperteyne unto yo'r ho'r before anie other what sooner it yo'r shall please to commande if w'thout having so manie over me being not to learne my dutie but onlie yo'r La'p to whome I doo acknowledge myself most bounden & therefore make tender but not out of anie necessitie but onlie meere dutie & respect unto yo'r ho'r for I may have entertaynm't in the services. Thus craveinge yo'r La'ps favourable censure & pardon for my p'esumpcon wch wth yo'r ho'rs answere I humblie rest

Yo'r ho'r's servant in all dutie & service  
to be commanded as yo'r ho'r pleaseth

THOMAS WORLEY.

This lre was showed to John Young att his Exham'n 28th April  
1625

The next that was seen of Thomas Worley was on Tuesday, April 26th, when, accompanied by a servant of the Duchess of Buckingham or of the old Countess, he walked to and fro on the side of the Strand opposite to Mr. Bowler's ale-house. They had long rapiers and great cudgels in their hands, but their intentions were not further specified. It is interesting to note that Mr. Elwick was actually in the ale-house at the time. The last that is read of them is in depositions dated April 28th, when Mr. Elwick brought the matter to a head by having them examined by representatives of the law, and so, it would seem, put a period to their activities.

So far as these facts go they might mean either of the following :

Firstly : That Thomas Worley, being out of a job, only visited the Lady Viscountess Purbeck hoping to be taken



## *The Lady of Bleeding Heart Yard*

back into her service, in spite of the fact that when he was in it he had behaved badly to her.

Secondly : That Thomas Worley was in the pay of the Duke and Countess of Buckingham, and trying to be taken into the service of the Lady Viscountess Purbeck for purposes of espionage or other uses of the Duke and Countess.

Or Thirdly : That Thomas Worley had intentions to kill the Lady Viscountess Purbeck and her young son by order of the Duke and Countess of Buckingham, and was promised a sum of money and a coronation pardon if he achieved his object.

The promptitude and foresight of Mr. Elwick frustrated whatever plans Thomas Worley may have had, and so caused his anger against the solicitor. The Lady Purbeck was free of him, and Thomas Worley, having flitted across the page, is read no more.

The Duke of Buckingham was beginning to have troubles of a more personal nature than the matrimonial affairs of his sister-in-law, and found it difficult to proceed with his case against her. He was not in the good graces of the new queen, and as Charles I chose to become as deeply attached to his young wife as he was deeply attached to the Duke of Buckingham there was bound to be trouble at once. Queen Henriette Marie was only fifteen years of age. She was dark and handsome, and attractive, but, of course, a mere child, and she was full of whims, petulance, and of her own importance.

The Duke of Buckingham had ruled the Court for a good many years. He had done what he liked with King James, and he now did what he liked with King Charles. He could not tolerate for one moment any division of honours, nor could he submit to the exertion of trying to win the affection

## *Auguries and omens*

and support of a little girl of fifteen. This was quite beneath his dignity. He was Favourite, and Favourite he intended to remain—King Charles I's "Steenie"—and the Queen must give way to him, not he to the Queen.

He was rude to her. He ordered her about; and he tried to make her take his mother and sister into her most intimate circle at Court. Queen Henriette Marie resented the rudeness, complained of being ordered about, and said she would not have the Countess of Buckingham and the Countess of Denbigh as ladies-in-waiting so close to her person. When she found how completely the Duke of Buckingham dominated her husband she quarrelled with King Charles. She had been the spoilt child of Marie de Medici and the French Court, and she had no mind to play second fiddle to the Duke of Buckingham in the Court of her husband. All the same, in course of time, she had to give way about the Countess of Denbigh, who was most ingratiating—became a Roman Catholic—and was eventually installed as First Lady of the Queen's Bedchamber.

The auguries had not been good when Charles I of England married the daughter of Henry of Navarre. Sixteen-twenty-five was a year of omens. Astrologers and soothsayers saw trouble in all of them. The bad influences began with the weather. January was mild and at times warm, and so ushered in an unseasonable February at the end of which occurred an alarmingly high tide that wrecked Thames Street and flooded Westminster Hall three feet deep in water. May was bitterly cold, and June was so wet that mist hung in a thick pall overhead and moisture oozed from the ground in pools and puddles underfoot. Lambeth Marsh was a lake, and the low-lying parts of the city were little better than waterways. If the signs then could have been read aright as they would be now there was no need to look to any supernatural agency for

## *The Lady of Bleeding Heart Yard*

portents. The crowded condition of the city and suburbs, the squalid nature of the tenements of the poor, the lack of sanitation and the unhealthy state of the burial grounds, all combined to threaten disaster.

Corpses were interred uncoffined, and these were the poor and often the most infectious cases, and the congested state of some of the graveyards prohibited sufficiently deep burial. It is clear that the result of a water-logged condition of the ground would soon breed a pestilence. Moreover, people were constantly interred in the churches and inadequately sealed vaults. Wells were not protected from the contamination of these sources of infection, and were often to be found in or close to burial grounds. Brewers' ponds were another source of danger, being often "so tainted with the Tast and Savour of Allome excrement, as that within a very short Space the Fish have been poisoned and the Water altogether unwholesome for brewing or any other use." Offal was thrown down anywhere, in the Thames, the streams, ponds and streets from butchers' shambles, hogsties, fish-shops, and cook-houses. Even in the Strand there were stalls and booths and all sorts of vendors' erections cluttering up the roadway, especially about the maypole, which stood 134 feet high, and was hooped with bands of iron, with the King's Arms on the crown and vane at the top.

Early in the year the first ominous signs of the plague began to show themselves. They were almost imperceptible, creeping into the bills of mortality in single figures. As the season advanced they increased gradually, and the people began to take precautions against an outbreak. By the time the King and Queen arrived in London in June the pestilence was so general that they had to come by water for fear of infection in the streets.

It was the Queen's first visit to the capital, and in spite of

## *A water pageant*

the plague Their Majesties were welcomed with manifestations of loyalty by a tremendous concourse of people. Crowds covered the river, and swarmed along the banks. The royal pair were a king and queen to appeal to a populace because of their good looks and their youth, and because there was always the hope that so new a king might do great things for his subjects.

There was a heavy rain falling. The June day was overcast. As the royal barge came in sight, escorted by a long train of river craft of every description, a loud volley of guns boomed from the Tower, and the bells of the churches which had already been set in motion pealed more merrily. The King and Queen were dressed in brightest green with many jewels, and braved the wet in their finery as they stood at the open windows of the state barge, the King bowing and the Queen waving her hand to the people.

There was nothing drab in that water procession. The boats and barges were very beautiful indeed—especially the barges. They were magnificently carved, had high graceful prows, elegant figureheads, and elaborately fitted cabins. Velvet, silk, and tapestry lent a finish to ornate moulding, paintwork, and gold and silver gilt. The bargees wore bright uniforms and rowed with painted oars, and there were a great many of them, adding a rhythmic note of colour to the already brilliant scene. Furthermore, spectators and procession vied with each other to make their costumes a blaze of colour from one end of the pageant to the other. It was late in the evening when the royal barge shot London Bridge and went to Denmark House. The rain had ceased. Bonfires blazed everywhere, and the bells rang on till midnight. Crowds surged up and down the Strand, acclaiming the King and Queen.

Their Majesties did not stay long in London. The King

## *The Lady of Bleeding Heart Yard*

opened Parliament—the first Parliament of his reign—and the Queen went with him. But the plague was growing daily more menacing, and after a little they retired to Hampton Court. The pestilence followed them there. They went to Windsor. It crept up to Windsor and beyond. The Court removed to Woodstock and issued orders that no one from the infected city was to go near them, and notices—enforced by a gibbet—were put up at the entrances to all the royal palaces. Incidentally the King and Queen were extremely short of money owing to all this disorganization, and nobody at Court got paid. It became almost impossible even to deliver a letter into London.

The King's consent was sought for a solemn fast, and the people repaired to the churches, where they stayed all day long, chanting psalms, listening to sermons, and saying prayers. And this not only for the ending of the terrible pestilence, but for the preservation of the nation's crops, which were being ruined by the ceaseless rain.

The plague of 1625 was a national calamity. It stayed every form of progressive activity. It was widespread. The people fleeing from London carried it all over the country. This was not because they were received anywhere with compassion. Far from it. They were shunned and outcast. The strictest regulations were made to keep them away from towns and villages ; but nevertheless they found their way into some of them or died in barns and sheds, in open fields and on the high roads. They swarmed out of London on horseback and on foot, by boat and by barge, with their pockets full and with their pockets empty. Soon there was hardly a horse to be seen or a hackney coach or a boat plying for hire. Dr. Donne, Dean of St. Paul's, wrote on November 28th : " The citizens fled away as out of a house on fire, and stuffed their pockets with their best ware, and threw themselves into the

## *The plague*

highways, and were not received so much as into barns, and perished so ; some of them with more money about them than would have bought the village where they died. A Justice of the Peace told me of one that died so with £1,400 about him."

They carried the infection all the way up the river, and to outlying hamlets. Stoke Poges suffered "by reason of the contagion," and a subscription was raised for the inhabitants.

In London the bills of mortality grew higher and higher through the summer until they reached the peak in August. At first people tried to stem the tide of infection with rules and remedies. As a preventive small cakes of arsenic were worn under the arms, and rue and wormwood were stuffed into the ears and nose. Lozenges and electuaries were sold in abundance, and there was a favourite prescription containing amongst other things, tormentilla root, white dittany, bole armeniac, and oriental pearl according to Dr. Creighton in his *History of Epidemics*. One man made a good trade from selling shilling powders and half-crown electuaries to the terrified people.

In the early days funerals were attended with the usual ceremony, the chief difference being that the mourners followed the coffins "with rue and wormwood stuffed into their ears and nostrils, looking like so many boars' heads stuck with branches of rosemary." After a while there were too many funerals and too few mourners for anything but haste in forwarding the burials ; and as the graveyards were full great pits were dug to take the dead. Whole streets were marked with the fatal red cross. Pest-houses were built in open spaces. Shops and inns were closed, booths and stalls dismantled ; and the thoroughfares of London, except for the bells which tolled an incessant accompaniment to the

## *The Lady of Bleeding Heart Yard*

cries and groans of sufferers, and the constant procession of dead-carts, were silent and practically deserted.

Everyone who could leave the stricken city did not hesitate to do so, and according to historians, conspicuous among them were the doctors, clergymen, and magistrates. The harvest lay with "sextons, coffin makers, bearers, plague searchers, apothecaries, and quacks." London grew deserted. The houses of the great stood closed and unoccupied, still as the death that had driven their owners away. Houses and hovels of the poor were equally cheerless. The people were afraid to open their windows to let in the contaminated air, and remained behind closed doors, only venturing out when necessity drove them. Grass grew in the streets and in the courtyard of Whitehall.

In September it was decided to adjourn the Law Courts and keep the term at Reading. The judge who had to go to London for this duty was Sir James Whitelocke, whose home was at Fawley Court, near Henley-on-Thames. From there he drove to Westminster Hall. At Hyde Park Corner—then a green country space—he and his attendants had a meal on the ground with what food they had brought with them, not daring to eat anything in the infected city. They drove as quickly through the streets as their horses could go, the sound of their coming echoing before them as they clattered over the cobbles between the empty houses.

The adjournment was rapidly performed, and the Judge drove back again to Henley, leaving the streets, when the echo of his passing had died away, as empty as before.

Perhaps it was the emptiness that at last stayed the plague, for after a while it diminished, and then was gone, and winds and rain came to cleanse the poisoned city. The danger was over, and people began to come back. At first they came fearfully, then with more courage, and when it was found that

## *A royal request*

nobody caught the plague they poured rapidly into London. The King and Queen went to Hampton Court and resumed their normal interests.

About this time it occurred to the King that a suitable mansion was required to house the French Ambassador, and that Hatton House in Holborn would do very well. Lady Hatton was in residence, and Mr. Secretary Conway was instructed to approach her. On December 28th Mr. Secretary Conway wrote from Hampton Court asking to borrow Hatton House on behalf of the King.

The lady replied at once. Dating her letter December 29th she said she was "sorry to receive commands from His Majesty which neither her health nor her fortune would allow her to obey. Had no other house fit for her to reside in but that in Holborn. Begs Lord Conway will present that answer to the King." It was not only the Bishop of Ely who could not dislodge the lady.

On Candlemas Day, 1626, the King was crowned. The Queen refused to be crowned with him—the ceremony was a Protestant one and she a Catholic. And so began the influence of Queen Henriette Marie, which as time went on was to lead King Charles always farther from his people.

The Parliament of 1625 had been memorable for the Duke of Buckingham. The House of Commons had fallen sharply upon him, and divers articles had been raised against him. To prevent further trouble the King had abruptly dissolved the Parliament. It had not overtroubled the Duke of Buckingham. He went to France as Ambassador Extraordinary and tried to make love to Anne of Austria, the French Queen, till he was ignominiously turned out by Cardinal Richelieu.

For a time at least Frances had been left in peace.



*A FINE, A PENANCE AND A FLIGHT*

SIR ROBERT HOWARD OBTAINED A CORONATION PARDON AND was released from the Fleet. In 1625 he was elected to Parliament as member for Bishop's Castle. In the following year he was again elected to Parliament as member for Bishop's Castle. In 1627 the Duke of Buckingham was busy venting his spleen against the French in the Isle of Rhé, and Sir Robert Howard continued his activities at home.

All over the country men were being pressed into the services. The people were being forced to find money for the prosecution of the Duke of Buckingham's plans. The English Channel was swarming with French and English pirates, and vessels were being taken on one side or the other. Sir John Hippisley was in charge of Dover Castle, and writing constantly about the arrival and despatch of ships. Sir William Becher was at Portsmouth, complaining that he had made arrangements for the reception and maintenance of troops at Southampton, but was much afflicted to hear no news of the ships with the victuals nor the money. He entreated His Majesty to hasten them away. Lady Hatton had sent from Purbeck six able men furnished from top to toe. What was he to do ?

A few days later—August 26th—Sir William Becher was writing again. He "had come to Southampton, had arranged to receive 400 recruits, and put them on board ship for transport, but up to this time to his great grief he had heard no news either of ships or money. There was a deficiency in the

## *A new trial*

number of recruits but he proposed to supply the deficiency out of the men for the Channel Islands, and there were Lady Hatton's six men."

The arrangements of the Duke of Buckingham were in a terrible muddle. They were in a still worse muddle when he was routed by the French, and returned minus men and money ignominiously to England. He had been outdone by the superior diplomacy and generalship of Cardinal Richelieu. His feelings were sore and his pride outraged. He was in no mood to see Sir Robert Howard at large, or taking a seat in Parliament, and he at once turned his attention to sending him back to the Fleet. Sir Robert Howard had not suffered punishment enough for past transgressions. If the Duke of Buckingham could make no impression on the French at least he could persecute his sister-in-law. Besides, Lady Hatton and Frances had made the most of the fiasco of the previous "trial" to throw discredit on the Villiers family, and strong feeling had been invoked on either side. Lady Hatton openly acknowledged her grandson and strenuously upheld his title to be the son of the Viscount Purbeck, and Frances adopted the attitude of innocence maligned and in distress. The law of the land was with them. Until it had been proved that the Viscount Purbeck could not possibly be the father of the child, little Robert remained a Villiers, and stood to inherit any Villiers property that came his way. Under these circumstances the Duke of Buckingham could not rest until he had proved his case against Frances, though in the opinion of many it was somewhat out of date.

It was still more out of date by the time it was brought, for it did not come on for hearing until November, 1627. To the infinite annoyance of His Grace the charge of sorcery had had to be dropped. There were no proofs that would have convinced anybody that Frances had been guilty of

## *The Lady of Bleeding Heart Yard*

“intoxicating her husband’s brains and practising in that kind on the Duke of Buckingham ”—and His Grace and his mother found themselves obliged to rely solely on the accusation of infidelity. And as it would appear that there were no new counts on this head against Sir Robert Howard and Frances, the Villiers family had to content themselves with the evidence they had been able to obtain concerning the period anterior to the birth of the baby.

All this time Frances had been either in custody or released on bail. She had been absorbed in the care of her young son, lavishing on him the love that was denied her elsewhere. What comfort she could draw from life she found in him. She had no other.

The suit was heard in the High Commission Court at London House. It was the kind of case which was bound to rouse public sympathy. Frances had aired her wrongs so loudly. The Duke of Buckingham was so powerful and so detested. Everyone knew that the Viscount Purbeck was but a poor sort of husband and that the old Countess persecuted her daughter-in-law ; and to the hubbub was added a revival of all the gossip that had centred round them at the time of the Villiers-Coke marriage ten years before. When the case came on for hearing crowds gathered round the court and London House was overflowing. It was the *cause célèbre* of its day.

With great solemnity the judges took their places, and, at that time of uncertain justice, they were a body formidable enough to alarm any accused person whether innocent or guilty. And with the Duke of Buckingham for an adversary, virtue was quite unlikely to be its own reward or any other.

The judges were :

Sir Thomas Coventry, Lord Keeper of the Great Seal ;

Henry, Earl of Manchester, Lord President of the Council ;

## *A day of judgment*

William, Earl of Pembroke, Lord Steward ;  
Philip, Earl of Montgomery, Lord Chamberlain ;  
Edward, Earl of Dorset ;  
Oliver, Viscount Grandison ;  
George, Lord Bishop of London ;  
Richard, Lord Bishop of Durham ;  
Samuel, Lord Bishop of Norwich ;  
John, Lord Bishop of Rochester ;  
William Laud, Lord Bishop of Bath and Wells (afterwards  
Lord Archbishop of Canterbury) ;  
Sir Henry Martin ;  
Dean of St. Paul's ;  
Dean of Rochester ;  
and several other ecclesiastics and lawyers.

It was November 19th, 1627.

Frances knew this was her day of judgment. But she knew, too, that whether she were judged innocent or guilty her life would be wrecked by the brother-in-law whose implacable hatred she had roused. Nevertheless, she would fight to the end. Her baby's future hung on the issue. She did not quail before the awesome array of judges. She faced them bravely.

She stood there, young and beautiful, in her long, wide dress, quilted to keep her warm, and stiff because of the quilting, with the sloping shoulders and broad round collar of the Court of Queen Henriette Marie, her fair hair falling in ringlets about her neck, her bosom rising and falling rapidly over the beating of her anxious heart. And above her the grave array of judges on their raised dais—the very grandeur of their robes inspiring awe, for there is nothing like costume for creating an atmosphere.

Below and behind her and on every side were the lawyers and clerks and court officials, her friends and supporters, the Duke of Buckingham's friends and supporters, Sir Robert

## *The Lady of Bleeding Heart Yard*

Howard's, and wherever there was room for them the curious, who had come to hear the case. From beyond the high windows of coloured glass came the muffled sound of traffic rattling over cobbles. Sometimes it made the panes shake, and voices had to be raised to drown it. On the other side was the quiet of the Bishop of London's garden beyond the panelled court-room.

Frances did not like the look of some of the witnesses. There were a good many of them. She wondered what they were going to testify against her. She saw some of her old servants, and those of her mother-in-law, her brother-in-law, and even of her husband. She asked herself how they had got so many together. The witnesses were telling the old story she knew so well. She was tired of hearing it. How she and Sir Robert Howard had had entertainments together—and meetings—and conferences. It was so long ago she had forgotten half of them. And then she held herself suddenly to attention. Someone was giving evidence of "only one maid servant being privy to them to which none was admitted but Howard only, a youth of a suspicious age."

She answered with scorn that these general accusations were "nothing to the purpose, and meetings and conferences were not to be construed into criminal conversation."

The judges concurred.

They may or may not have argued the question of Sir Robert Howard's youth, and decided what age might be or might not be suspicious—or even how age could come into the matter at all—at any rate they asked for less general imputations.

The Duke of Buckingham produced the midwife who had attended Frances when her baby was born, and other witnesses, who duly testified that she had had a son. This proved nothing. The law of "the four seas" still held good.

### *More witnesses appear*

Frances eloquently, and with her usual vehemence, told the Court that owing to the cruelty with which she and her husband were always treated by his family they had been forced to live apart, but that they had the happiness to meet together when he was in his right senses, and that her son was his. They had, however, concealed their meetings, as also her son's birth, from the Villiers family for fear of the fury that would be let loose upon them, and she painted a touching picture of the terror in which she lived, and which compelled her to give her baby an assumed name. She demanded that her husband be brought into court to corroborate her statements.

The Duke of Buckingham would by no means produce his brother. And whether this was because the Viscount Purbeck was again frenzied or because he would certainly have helped Frances out of the difficulty it is impossible to say. She called for her husband again and again ; but he was not allowed to appear, and the case went on without him.

The Duke of Buckingham purported to show that Frances had not lived with her husband for above a year—some accounts say two years—before the child was born, and that he was forty miles away, and “intrusted in the hands of physicians for the cure of a melancholy distemper,” when Frances declared they were together. But he did not prove that Frances had not gone to where the Viscount Purbeck was, and there was no denying that in 1622-3 the Viscount Purbeck was in his right mind for a time at least.

With all this, nothing conclusive had as yet transpired and the Duke of Buckingham had to produce further evidence. More witnesses appeared ; and a tale was told to the effect that Sir Robert Howard “to his no small Hazard and Danger came into her Chamber through the Roof of an adjoining House.”

## *The Lady of Bleeding Heart Yard*

When all the evidence had been given and the verdict considered there was a short pause. The solemn judges grew more solemn still, Frances more pale and anxious. The tension was as much as she could bear. There came a faint rustling movement from the judicial seats. Then, with all eyes turned on her and no other sound in the court-room but the grave tones in which the verdict was pronounced, she heard her sentence.

Guilty.

She was to pay a fine of £500 and to do penance. She was to walk barefoot in a white sheet from Paul's Cross to the Savoy and stand at the door of the church there for all and sundry to see her. This was to be done on a following Sunday ; and if she did not present herself she would be arrested and imprisoned until she had performed her penance.

Frances preferred to risk the penalties of disobedience rather than emulate Jane Shore. The crowd that collected on that winter Sunday and waited from Paul's Cross to the Savoy, gaped and waited in vain. There was no white sheet and there was no Lady Viscountess Purbeck.

Contemporary record says that she withdrew herself. In truth she remained indoors, in some obscure abode, afraid to venture forth, afraid, almost, to venture about the house lest warrant officers might appear suddenly in unexpected places.

The Viscount Purbeck had not asked for a divorce and the judges had not granted one, and quite likely the Duke of Buckingham had given up the idea since he could not force his brother to agree. No doubt he felt a vindictive joy in seeing Frances tied for life to his dolorous brother, and unable to marry the man she really loved.

The trial at London House, the publicity and the disagreeable nature of the verdict were enough to bring down the

## *Hide and seek*

pride and courage of anyone, but they did not bring down the pride and courage of Lady Hatton. She looked a little grim. She was certainly more irritable, but her resource did not forsake her. At all costs Frances must be saved from that terrible penance. That *her* daughter should undergo anything of the sort was unthinkable. Frances must be got away.

Lady Hatton passed the next few weeks in a series of unpleasant thrills. She was in constant dread lest her daughter should be found. She did not enjoy her Christmas. The thoughts of the Duke of Buckingham were "wholly engrossed with this affair," and with the discovery and apprehension of his sister-in-law. Rewards were offered for information concerning her whereabouts ; but Lady Hatton was always ahead of him, and though Frances was found she never was caught. Fresh search was made for her every day, and this was necessary because as soon as her brother-in-law's spies discovered her retreat she was gone by the time the warrant officers arrived to arrest her. The Duke of Buckingham "gave strict charge to the Magistrates, that they should sieze on her Person and convey her to Prison " (Johnston).

It was most agitating for Frances ; and it was the more difficult in that she took her boy with her wherever she went. A child three or four years old is not easy to hide at any time, yet she dared not let him out of her sight. She was afraid of what might happen to him if he fell into the hands of the Duke of Buckingham, or even into those of the warrant officers. At the best he would be a hostage which they could use to bring her forward to protect him. So she would run no risk by leaving him.

There came a day when the searchers of the Duke of Buckingham reported that the Viscountess Purbeck had been found, and that this time she could not evade them because the warrant officers were already surrounding the house.



## *The Lady of Bleeding Heart Yard*

She was next door to the Ambassador of the Duke of Savoy, and if that diplomat could be prevailed on to let the warrant officers into her garden through his own garden gate, there would be no difficulty about her arrest.

The warrant officers had taken up their stand outside, guarding every entrance and every exit round the house where she lodged—a private house, but we are not told to whom it belonged—and waited for something to happen. In the meantime the Countess of Buckingham undertook to see what she could do with the Ambassador of Savoy, and sent “a gentleman to him” to crave permission for the officers of the law to “pass through his house and garden” into the garden of the house where Lady Purbeck lay concealed. The Ambassador did not relish the thought of chasing a lady, and begged to be excused. The Countess of Buckingham sent again. Again the Ambassador begged to be excused. Then the Countess of Buckingham became disagreeable, and the Ambassador was in a quandary between the two. He hinted, however, to the Countess of Buckingham’s gentleman that at dinner-time there might be a chance of accomplishing their object on the person of the Lady Purbeck, but he would not have more than one constable in his garden. They must be content with that.

Accordingly at dinner-time they were all on the alert ; and it looked as though their efforts were to meet with reward, for a coach drove up to the side entrance of the Ambassador’s house, and there was a furtiveness about its movements which promised to be interesting. Presently there was a stir. Doors opened. Someone rushed out. The servants of the Ambassador rushed out also and hurried the someone into the coach. The constable in the Ambassador’s garden saw that it was a young lady with fair hair, but before he could get to the spot the coachman had started his horses, and under the

## *A page-boy in lady's dress*

very noses of the law officers they were driving down the Strand.

The constable at once gave the alarm to the men outside and raced after them as fast as he could go. The chase began, and they all followed the coach at breakneck speed. It lumbered and clattered over the cobbles, shaking and rattling the windows of every house it passed, and splashing mud as it plunged along the street, to the imminent danger of foot passengers in the line of route. A crowd collected to see the finish and followed in a hurrying trail behind them.

All was quiet at the house of the Ambassador of Savoy, and his "garden had been cleaned of the constable." But before the noise and rattle of the chase had died in the distance another coach with a pair of horses drove unobtrusively to the front of the house next door. A gate opened. Frances stepped out, most becomingly dressed in the garments of a page-boy. With her little son in her arms she climbed into the coach, and was driven away in the opposite direction to the hubbub in the Strand. The Duke of Buckingham's men were nowhere to be seen. In spite of the daily search and the offer of rewards they had missed her again.

When at last the warrant officers caught up the first coach in the midst of an enormous crowd, they found in it one of the Ambassador's pages—"a handsome, fair boy"—dressed in a lady's clothes.

But the Ambassador got into trouble over the business. The Duke of Buckingham took a serious view of this manœuvring to defeat the ends of justice. It was some time before the representative of Savoy could even speak with him, and emissaries had to be sent to beg his peace. In the end, after an interview of an hour's duration in the garden of Whitehall, they were reconciled and the Duke's displeasure was allowed to lapse.

## *The Lady of Bleeding Heart Yard*

What Sir Robert Howard had been doing during this time is somewhat uncertain, but as soon as Frances had made her escape from the house next door to the Ambassador of Savoy, he took her with her baby to Clun in Shropshire, where he had property, and looked after her as best he could. It seemed to him to be the only thing he could do.

It was an anxious journey into Shropshire for both of them. At every stopping-place they feared to find trouble. But it was not possible to get from London to Clun in those days in a single run. Horses had to be changed, and stop they must. They arrived at last, and Frances reasoned she might for a time at any rate escape the clutches of her brother-in-law. But it might be only for a short time. The Duke of Buckingham would guess, as soon as it became known that Sir Robert Howard had returned to Shropshire, that she had gone with him. She hardly dared to venture out of doors. She dreamt of pursuits and warrant officers. Every dark corner was a shadowy menace.

As the days passed and grew into weeks her anxiety increased. It must be known by now where she was, and any minute one of her brother-in-law's warrant officers might appear before her. The only comfort was that she was in Sir Robert Howard's own country. At least she might hope to be warned of trouble, and that would give her the chance to make good her escape. In the meanwhile she had somewhere to lay her head. Sir Robert Howard was good to her, and her baby was safe. After all she had suffered she must be thankful for such mercies as these, and Frances had suffered from the time of her marriage. She had fought—resentfully fought—the life King James and her father had imposed on her. She had defied the claims of social constructiveness and ignored the voice of wisdom. She had refused to forfeit the

## *A great disappointment*

love that through no fault of her own was denied her. But she had overlooked public opinion.

Public opinion is so much a matter of mental process that unless we come up against it we do not know what a tremendous stranglehold it has. It changes with the times, yet in some things remains fundamentally the same—which is only another way of saying that in some things the times do not change at all. Frances found that public opinion disapproves of marital infidelity—particularly in wives; and though there was a certain amount of sympathy for her among people who knew the circumstances of her life, they were the people who would have been sympathetic towards anybody in affliction—the charitable souls of the world. So it was not altogether a comfortable life that she led in Shropshire.

Moreover, she was unused to this wild country on the borders of Wales, and to the quiet and isolation. It is difficult to believe that she fitted into it happily. She had her son, and she had Sir Robert Howard, but could they—would they—compensate for everything else she had lost?

She had been having such a miserable time for years—driven from pillar to post—sometimes in custody and sometimes released on bail—that it could not be as bad as that. At least now she had kindness in her home. But the sword of Damocles hung over her head in the shape of her unperformed penance and the warrant out against her, and her son's future was overcast. Perhaps she and Sir Robert Howard, by running away together, thought that she would be divorced and then they could be married. Perhaps they planned that when they came to Shropshire. If so they were doomed to disappointment. The Viscount Purbeck did not ask for a divorce.

Little is known about Sir Robert Howard. Although he

## *The Lady of Bleeding Heart Yard*

was the main figure in the picture of her life he is but a shadow on the canvas of his times. When the shadow does become at all clear it is only as the devoted lover of Frances that he is seen. He eludes the fancy because his career eludes research. The heads of it are known, but they are too few to paint him in a full length portrait. He was member for Bishop's Castle during certain years as has been shown, but nothing striking about his activities appears. He was on Commission of Array for Salop and Colonel of Dragoons. Years after he and Frances went to Shropshire he figured in the Civil War. He was a Royalist, which caused him to be disabled by the Roundheads from sitting in Parliament, and his estate was sequestered and a fine of £942 imposed on him. At one time during the war he had Dutch soldiers at Aston-on-Clun, a mile from Hopesay House—his home in Shropshire. At another time Hopesay House was a Royalist garrison. He was Governor of Bridgnorth Castle when it surrendered to the Parliament in 1646. There are two or three more items to add to these. But the tale is meagre. He cannot be made to live again with only a paragraph suitable for a directory page.

Yet as the lover of Frances Coke the soul of him is seen through that devotion which lasted as long as she lived. All that was best in him was hers. All her life he loved her. If circumstances had been in their favour theirs might have been one of those love stories of history that last for ever, because they are as beautiful as they are rare.

Little is known about their time together in Shropshire. So little that it is even uncertain in which house they lived. Some say it was Clun Castle and others that it was Hopesay House—others again that it was the Hall in the Forest. It seems unlikely to have been Clun Castle, for even in the days of Leland—a hundred years before—Clun Castle was "somewhat ruinous," and for this reason was not fortified during the

## *Clun and Hopesay*

Civil War. It is scarcely to be expected that had it been habitable it would not have been chosen as a garrison in preference to Hopesay House, both in point of situation and in point of size. It is a ruin now—grim and forbidding. And as its position is such that it must have been always grim and forbidding, it is hardly likely Sir Robert Howard would have considered living in a corner of it—while “somewhat ruinous”—a suitable thing to do.

Hopesay House was about seven miles away, but its whereabouts cannot now be traced with any certainty. There is a theory that it may have stood on the site of the present rectory, much of which has been built, or rebuilt since, though there is one curious feature about its construction. In one of the bedrooms on an upper floor is a “secret” staircase, closed at both ends and winding down to what in old days may have been a hiding-place. It is possible that here is the very apartment Frances occupied, so as to have a refuge in case those warrant officers descended on her, but there is no proof either way. Sir Robert Howard held the living of Hopesay—his arms are still in the church. No more is known.

The Hall in the Forest is no longer to be seen. It was a large house, in the very heart of the woods, and so secluded that, on the assumption that Sir Robert Howard would take Frances to the safest place he had, some people think it was their home. There is now a farm on the site of it, but whether in this any part of the old mansion is incorporated is doubtful. The country round both Clun and Hopesay is remote and beautiful. A range of hills lies on one side and the forest lies on the other, and there are brooks and dales and stretches of heath between. Three hundred years ago it was still more remote, and with the men and arms that the times allowed at his disposal, Sir Robert Howard probably felt that it was the best place that could be found to watch over Frances in safety.

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XVI

*SOME ENEMIES MAKE THEIR EXIT*

LADY HATTON WAS ALWAYS BOUND BY HER LOVE FOR HER daughter, but there are indications—so faint as to be only just perceptible—that at this period of their lives Lady Hatton was not too pleased with Frances. She was a lady who did not bear shocks well. She stood up to them firmly, but she resented the impact.

The trial of 1627, the verdict, and the penance had been shocks enough, but when it came to the flight of Frances with Sir Robert Howard there was more than enough. She had upheld her daughter through all her troubles with unfailing loyalty. Frances had taken advantage of this and had deceived her. She resented deception, and she considered herself wronged. Moreover, the destruction of all her hopes weighed heavily on her. She was fifty years of age, and the resilience of youth had gone. She was set in her ways. She could not place a new idol on a new pedestal, and the old one gave her nothing but disappointment. Lady Hatton believed that if Frances had followed her advice all would have been well, and that their future—in spite of the Villiers family—might have lain together in some contentment. She was learning that filial obedience is a somewhat uncertain quantity, and that however much people may plan for the welfare of their children—particularly in the matter of love affairs—they cannot rely on their co-operation.

Experience, which ought to be a help, often raises a barrier.

## *Lady Hatton offers aid*

Both sides want to have their own way. Parents are conscious that their way is based on experience—that of children on the lack of it—which rather hampers effort ; and the one thing experience does not seem to teach is tact in this connection. Lady Hatton was going through as bad a time as a mother can endure, for next to losing her children there is nothing so hard as feeling disappointment in them.

It is not to be supposed that she remained in miserable meditation after Frances left her. On the contrary she plunged into renewed activity. She was a very great lady, and she ignored none of the responsibilities of *noblesse oblige*. Her house was in constant agitation about something : petitions—politics—alms for the poor. There was always someone wanting assistance or endeavouring to drive a bargain, and when there was no one else there was the Bishop of Ely. Moreover, she had an immense circle of relations, and cousins down to the remotest degree of removal, and friends. There was no need for her to be alone at any time, and alone she never was.

Some of her ways of helping people were as original as everything else about her—as when she wrote to Mr. Secretary Windebank a little later—about 1633—in support of a young man and a young lady she was befriending. To Mr. Secretary Windebank she said :

Mr. Secretarye

the knave I told you of, is since I saw you used like a knave, and turned of the place you know of, and the younge gentlewoman I spake to you of, is now found a ward to the Kinge, and if my late cominge to the towne make it not to late for yo'r intellegence, I should thinke it fittinge for yo'r consideration to begge, and shal be in this or any thinge else ready to serve you as

Yo'r assured lovinge frend

ELIZA HATTON.



## *The Lady of Bleeding Heart Yard*

She does not, however, reveal who the knave and young gentlewoman were.

She was not so pleased with the Court as she had been when Queen Anne of Denmark lived. She deprecated the politics of King Charles and his young wife, foreseeing that if they did not mend their views there would soon be serious trouble. The one thing in which she and the Queen were in complete accord, however, was their dislike of "Steenie." They both looked on him as the source of their woes.

At this time Lady Hatton's niece, Diana, Countess of Oxford, was a widow, and they were much together. The Earl of Oxford had gone abroad to join the forces fighting to restore the Palatinate, had caught a fever at the siege of Breda, and died at the Hague. He was brought back to England, and was buried in Westminster Abbey in July, 1625. As he left no children, Robert de Vere, the heir male, and Lord Willoughby de Eresby, the heir general, brought rival claims to the title. There was a lawsuit, which Robert de Vere won.

These matters were of intense interest to Lady Hatton, and were canvassed at Hatton House with unabated vigour. In the midst of them she never forgot the Queen of Bohemia in exile, and went sometimes to the Hague to see her. She was friendly with Sir Francis Nethersole, the Queen of Bohemia's secretary, and there is an indication that she assisted him. Among the State Papers is a letter dated from the Strand on April 6th, 1628, and written by Sir Francis Nethersole to the Queen of Bohemia, in which he "begs the Queen to thank Lady Hatton for his return."

Although there was still no love lost between Sir Edward Coke and his lady, and he was still being as disagreeable about her dowry as he could, they were both on the same side in politics; and it was not long before Sir Edward Coke was

M<sup>rs</sup> Secretary.

the knave & to you of, is for  
I am you (I) like a knave and  
turned of the place you know of  
now like young gentlewomen &  
spoke to you of is now found & near  
to the house, if my late coming  
to the house make it not to let  
for you intelligent, I should  
think it fitting for you  
congratulation to begin. and shall  
in this or any thing else  
ready to serve you as

Y<sup>r</sup> affec<sup>t</sup>ed humble son



L<sup>rd</sup> Hatton



## *Coke becomes High Sheriff*

taking a lead in Parliament which, however much Lady Hatton disliked him, she could not but approve.

When first King Charles came to the throne, and the Parliament of 1625 was called, Sir Edward Coke began by showing a moderation unusual for him, and, in spite of the long list of grievances that had been carried over from the previous reign, advised that "there might be no Committee for Grievances, because this was the very beginning of the new King's reign, in which there can be no Grievances as yet."

It was not for long, however, that such a happy state of things could last. King Charles was as hot on the trail of the royal Prerogative as ever his father had been. He considered he was above the laws, which therefore could not apply to him, and that he was entitled to send people to prison without the preliminaries of a trial, and to levy forced loans and benevolences without permission from Parliament. Indeed, he wanted to govern without Parliament—the Divine Right to be the sole criterion—and because it was necessary to go to the country for supplies he wanted to raise supplies on his own authority alone.

This would not do at all. Sir Edward Coke soon quarrelled with the Court, and the Committee for Grievances was formed. The King was exasperated beyond measure, but, as he was always wanting supplies and could not get them, he had to call another Parliament in 1626. He did not want Sir Edward Coke in it. With some ingenuity a method was thought of whereby the elderly lawyer could be kept out of his seat. He was made High Sheriff for his county, with an injunction from the King that High Sheriffs should not sit in the House of Commons during their term of office. Instead of coming up to Parliament, therefore, Sir Edward Coke stood with a white wand behind the judges of assize, and attended official

## *The Lady of Bleeding Heart Yard*

functions in a very impressive costume instead of venting his views on the conduct of the King in his own.

The Duke of Buckingham's foolishness in going to war with France, and the muddling way in which His Majesty ran the Kingdom, soon tied them up into such a knot of incompetence and waste, that the question of supplies remained a burning one, and the list of grievances became longer than ever. A third Parliament had to be called. This Parliament sat in March, 1628, and Sir Edward Coke had the choice of representing two counties—Suffolk and Buckinghamshire—as a hint of what the people expected of him. He was duly elected for Buckinghamshire.

He was seventy-seven. His mental vigour was unimpaired. And as nothing happened this time to keep him out of his seat, he was able to make the session memorable by the introduction of his famous Petition of Right, which struck at the root of Prerogative, and has been fittingly called the second Magna Carta. Together with that organ it forms the mainspring of the British Constitution. The Petition of Right established Sir Edward Coke's fame for ever. He had achieved the ambition of his patriotism. He was venerated by the people. Both Houses of Parliament passed the measure; but when it came up for the royal sanction the King and the Duke of Buckingham returned an answer which negated its value.

There was great excitement in Parliament when this happened. So ominous did it become that Mr. Speaker—Speaker Finch—hastily exclaimed: "I am commanded to interrupt any member who shall asperse a minister of State."

This brought Sir Edward Coke to his feet; but he could not speak. He was obliged to sit down to regain his composure. With his face working, and his aged form trembling under the

## *The Petition of Right*

stress of emotion, he found words at last, and with tears in his voice cried out :

" I see now that God has not accepted of our humble and moderate carriages and fair proceedings : and the rather, because I fear they deal not sincerely with the King and with the country in making a free representation of all these miseries. I repent myself, since things are come to this pass, that I did not sooner declare the whole truth ; and, not knowing whether I shall ever speak in this House again, I will do it freely now. We have dealt with that duty and moderation that never was the like after such a violation of the liberties of the subject. What shall we do : Let us palliate no longer ; if we do, God will not prosper us. I think the Duke of Buckingham is the cause of all our miseries, and, till the King be informed thereof, we shall never go out with honour or sit with honour here. That man is the grievance of grievances. Let us set down the causes of all our disasters, and they will all reflect upon him. It is not the King, but the Duke."

Cries of "'Tis he ! 'Tis he !" resounded through the House. If there were any dissentients they were silent.

The King found himself forced to submit to the Petition of Right. He gave the royal assent. He had no intention, however, of keeping faith with what had been wrung from him against his will, and lost no time in going back on his word. It was too late. The Petition of Right had become a Statute of English Law.

In vain King Charles tried to assert that his Prerogative had been in no way altered by the Parliament. In vain he declared that his power permitted him on his sole authority to levy tonnage and poundage. Armed with the Petition of Right the House of Commons rose instantly to protest, and the only way out of it for the King was to prorogue the Parliament.

## *The Lady of Bleeding Heart Yard*

It was merely a temporary measure. The people were too incensed against the Duke of Buckingham for any lasting benefit to be gained, and the King did himself and his Favourite no good by ignoring the public clamour. Even the Countess of Buckingham grew uneasy, and cautioned her son not to displease the people.

There was an ominous undercurrent of disquiet which found expression—as massed thought and feeling often do—in foretelling the obvious by superstitious portents and omens. In this connection it is related that the Duke of Buckingham was not allowed to go unwarned. A gentleman retainer of the Villiers family who had known Sir George Villiers, the Duke of Buckingham's father, had a series of curious dreams, in which he alleged that the late Sir George Villiers appeared to him and instructed him to “go to his son, the Duke, and tell him that if he did not somewhat to ingratiate himself with the people, or at least to abate the extreme malice which they had against him, he would be suffered to live but a short time.” Which was precisely what his mother the Countess said she feared.

The gentleman retainer was employed at Windsor Castle in the King's Wardrobe, and at the time the visions occurred the Duke of Buckingham was with the Court in London. The retainer therefore did not feel justified in making a special journey to relate a dream of so uncomplimentary a nature, the more particularly as the Duke might have taken ill such a warning from an underling. The visions, however, continued, and with each nocturnal appearance Sir George Villiers became more angry, threatening to haunt the Gentleman of the Wardrobe for the rest of his life, if he did not immediately comply with his request; and, that the Duke might credit the ghostly admonitions and give heed to them, his father related certain incidents which had hitherto been

## *A ghost story*

known only to three people in the world—himself, his son, and one other. These incidents were to be divulged to his son as proof of the genuineness of the apparition.

Fearing that the ghost intended to keep his promise to haunt him, and being anxious to get rid of such an unwelcome state of things, the Gentleman of the Wardrobe went up to London and arranged with Sir Ralph Freeman for an interview with the Favourite. The interview took place early one morning near Lambeth Bridge before the assembling of a hunt in the neighbouring marshes, and, though nobody heard what passed between them, it was obvious the Duke was much discountenanced, and stayed talking with the retainer for the best part of an hour. When they parted he joined the hunt, but had no pleasure in it, and leaving before it was over repaired to the lodgings of his mother in Whitehall. He remained alone with her for some hours, but in spite of the curiosity roused in the household nobody heard what was said. The voices of mother and son were raised in argument, and when he left her his face was scowling and troubled, and she in a torrent of tears.

All the same this was as much attention as the Duke of Buckingham chose to give to the warning, and continued as heretofore to go his own way. Perhaps he thought that his mother, whose cautions he had disregarded, had been at the bottom of the old retainer's visions, and had concocted them as a means of bringing her son to his senses before it was too late.

Before long the Duke of Buckingham had a warning of a more practical kind. He still patronized Dr. Lambe, and had even taken him into some sort of service. The populace believed that the pair of them were in league with the Devil, and that by means of Dr. Lambe's divinations and enchantments the Favourite was able to retain his hold over the King.



## *The Lady of Bleeding Heart Yard*

Dr. Lambe was now above eighty years of age but still active. He placed more faith in the Duke than he did in the people, and followed his master in ignoring the trend of public opinion ; but if the grievance of grievances was to be overthrown it was necessary to begin with his familiar.

On June 13th certain unruly spirits turned against Dr. Lambe. It was a Friday, and the combination of day and date was afterwards duly noted : “ On Friday, he went to see a play at the Fortune Theatre, in Golden Lane, Cripplegate, where the boys of the town and other unruly people, having observed him present, after the play was ended, flocked about him and (after the manner of the common people who follow a hubbub when it is once set on foot) began in a confused manner to assault him and offer him violence. He in affright made towards the city as fast as he could, and hired a company of sailors that were there to be his guard. But so great was the fury of the people, who pelted him with stones and other things that next came to hand, that the sailors had much to do to bring him in safety as far as Moorgate. The rage of the people about that place increased so much that the sailors, for their own safety, were forced to leave the protection of him ; and then the multitude pursued him through Coleman Street to the Old Jewry, no house being able or daring to give him protection, though he attempted many.

“ Four constables were there raised to appease the tumult, who, all too late for his safety, brought him to the Counter of the Poultry, where he was bestowed upon command of the Lord Mayor. For, before he was brought thither, the people had had him down, and with stones and cudgels and other weapons, had so beaten him that his skull was broken ; and all parts of his body bruised and wounded ; whereupon, though surgeons in vain were sent for, he never spoke a



THE MOB PELTING DR. LAMBE IN THE STREETS OF LONDON  
ON JUNE 13TH, 1628



## *Death of the Duke*

word ; but lay languishing till the next morning, and then died.”<sup>1</sup>

That the Duke of Buckingham might make no mistake as to why Dr. Lambe had been so served, the following posters appeared on the walls of London :

WHO RULES THE KINGDOM?    THE KING  
WHO RULES THE KING?        THE DUKE  
WHO RULES THE DUKE?        THE DEVIL  
LET THE DUKE LOOK TO IT OR HE WILL BE  
SERVED AS HIS DOCTOR WAS SERVED.

But it seemed as though nothing would move the Duke of Buckingham from his insolent arrogance. In August he was at Portsmouth making ready for a new expedition to France. It was contrary to the dictates of prudence and security, for it was a singularly unpopular measure. There was now a long list of counts against him. He had most flagrantly disobeyed the laws of good taste and good citizenship. He had made a fortune from bribes. He had led the King into injudicious and tortuous paths which could only end in disaster. He could do nothing right.

There came a day when London was ringing with the news that the Duke of Buckingham was dead. He had been assassinated by a lieutenant of a foot company, one John Felton, as he was passing through a dark lobby at the house at Portsmouth where he was staying prior to embarking for his second expedition to France. This was on August 23rd, a Saturday, in the year 1628. It was only nine months after he had obtained judgment against Frances in the Prerogative Court of High Commission, on November 19th, 1627.

<sup>1</sup> *From a contemporary pamphlet. JOHN TIMBS, "Romance of London," vol. i, pp. 479-80.*

## *The Lady of Bleeding Heart Yard*

In connection with his death a curious story is told. It concerns the Countess of Denbigh. She was devoted to her brother, and when the messenger came to her with the news of his death—she not having heard of it—she was asleep in bed. The messenger was told he durst not disturb her, and he said he would wait until she was stirring. Even while he was waiting there came a loud scream from the bedroom of the Countess, and she cried out with alarm that she had had a terrible dream in which she had seen her brother, the Duke of Buckingham, riding with her in a coach through a concourse of people, who were shouting as though they were in great glee. There was nevertheless something sinister about the dream and they were asked why they were making so much noise. The answer came: "The Duke of Buckingham is dead and we are shouting for joy." The curiosity—or coincidence—lies in the fact that the messenger was even then waiting to tell her that this was so.

The death of the Duke of Buckingham did not bring a millennium. The flotsam and jetsam of his activities continued to be thrown up long after he was dead. There was a short and stormy Parliament in 1629, and then the King continued to reign for eleven years without one. The war was abandoned, but the list of grievances grew gradually longer; and among them were the saltpetremen.

The saltpetremen were the searchers for salt for the manufacture of gunpowder, and they were a national nuisance. They had authority to search wherever they thought the natural salt might be found, and their ideas on the subject were singularly unpleasant. By April, 1630, the outcry against some of them was so great that a Committee was formed to enquire into the grievance. This Committee reported that "according to the proofs there is no part of their commission which they have not extremely abused. As in digging in

## *The saltpetremen*

all places without distinction, as in parlours, bedchambers, threshing and malting floors, yea, God's own house they have not forborne ; but have digged in chapels and churchyards, tearing men's bones and ashes out of their graves, to make gunpowder of, and placing their tubs as well in the bodies of churches as in churchyards, divers weeks together. And as they dig in all places, so they respect not times or seasons, digging and working in the breeding-time in dove houses, continuing also much longer and working more hours in a day than they need, or by their commission they are authorized, oftentimes three weeks, sometimes a moneth or five weeks, together, seven or eight hours in a day, sometimes from sun rising to sun setting, whereby the flights of doves are destroyed ; and without respect of harvest time, in barns, to the hindrance of the poor husbandman's inning of his crop, in or near malting time in malting floors, even when green malt is upon the floor ; in working shops three weeks together, where the poor tradesman should earn his bread ; in mercers' shops, in market towns, in the midst of the market time, the shops full of customers ; and in bedchambers, and under the very beds, and placing their tubs by the bedside of the old and impotent, sick and diseased, of women with their children at their breasts, and even of women in childbed, and of sick persons lying on their deathbeds, with so much barbarous cruelty to their persons and their goods, and with so base and uncivil language, as is hard to be believed any could have done that professed themselves Christians, or had been bred in a civil government. They have undermined walls, and seldom fill up the places they have digged. In taking up carts they observe no seasons, and charge more carts than are needful, discharging some again for bribes, and overload the carts they employ. They do not pay the prices for carriage required by the commission. They take up coals not only where they

## *The Lady of Bleeding Heart Yard*

are sold, but from those that have fetched them, 20 or 30 miles by land for their own winter's provision.

"RECOMMEND that the offenders should be punished, and that the commission be taken in, and a new one made out, with restrictions designed to put an end to the abuses complained of."<sup>1</sup>

One of the members of the Committee sitting to investigate the activities of the saltpetremen was Sir Kenelm Digby, son of the Sir Everard Digby of the Gunpowder Plot, and a relation of the Earl of Bristol. He was enthusiastic in his efforts to put an end to so much unbelievable wrong, yet he was, perhaps, not altogether a suitable person to judge others. He had only recently returned from privateering in the Mediterranean, where he had got into trouble with the Venetian Government, and he was something of a "gentleman adventurer" in other ways. He comes into the story of Lady Hatton and Frances later, but at this period was trying to erase the impression that his privateering exploits had made on the King and Council. He was married to Venetia, daughter of Sir Edward Stanley, a lady who was a little older than Frances, and whose career had caused as much interest before marriage as that of Frances had done after marriage.

In 1629 Lady Hatton was busy with a fresh petition, in which she received the assistance of her old friend Sir Dudley Carleton, who was now the Viscount Dorchester and Secretary of State. And in 1630 she was sending him a note excusing herself for "writing what reference she desires to her petition. At one o'clock means to be at Whitehall, hoping to disburden herself of a thousand thanks."

In 1631 she was selling her property at Whittlesey and at Croft, and encountering some difficulty in the doing of it. For Sir Edward Coke would not join with her, and she was

<sup>1</sup> *Calendar of STATE PAPERS, Domestic, 1630.*

## *Purbeck again afflicted*

trying to get a warrant from the King to permit her to complete the sale as a *femme sole*. Attorney-General Heath said that she would have to acknowledge a fine. The Lord Chief Justice Richardson refused to take the acknowledgment, saying it was directly against law, and there was some delay occasioned by this difference of opinion, but it did not daunt Lady Hatton. She procured a warrant for the signature of the King, sent it to Secretary Dorchester, and got Lord Holland to add a postscript urging despatch. On July 16th the King wrote to Attorney-General Heath sending the warrant to take the acknowledgment of a fine by Lady Hatton as a *femme sole* for completion of the sale of the lands, being part of her separate estate, to Sir Thomas Cecil and others.

Two months later His Majesty was writing from Hampton Court to the Countess of Buckingham about the Viscount Purbeck.

Very little had been heard of the Viscount Purbeck since he had watched over Frances when she had the smallpox in December, 1624 ; but he appears to have been in the care of a Mr. Henry Berkeley—perhaps a relation of the Sir Maurice Berkeley who had married Elizabeth, Lady Hatton's elder daughter. The King wrote to the Countess of Buckingham to say that "her son Viscount Purbeck being afflicted with distemper and weakness, she is required to take him into her custody and tender his health, and be watchful over him, to prevent such ill accidents as oftentimes accompany such distempers."

Four weeks afterwards, on October 26th, 1631, Henry Berkeley wrote to Secretary Dorchester from Wymondham that he had

received his letter concerning His Majesty's care of disposing of Lord Purbeck to the custody of his mother. Two days before the receipt of that letter Lord Purbeck took his journey for London,



## *The Lady of Bleeding Heart Yard*

and, being at Barnet, was diverted from his intendment, and brought back to his mother at Whaddon, where he remains. Whilst he was with Henry Berkeley his only grief was, that whilst he was with his mother at Whaddon, he was so wrought upon for his religion, as being overcome in their way is now his trouble of conscience, and the only cause of his coming to Henry Berkeley. For the four years he was with him previously, never saw him distempered.<sup>1</sup>

The Countess of Buckingham did not long watch over her eldest son. In April, 1632, she died.

Both her younger sons had predeceased her, and she left her estate in land to her daughter Susan, and her son Anglesey's children. Christopher Villiers had been the Viscount Anglesey. It was said in Whitehall that she had not left as much as was expected—not above £1,000 a year.

She was buried with great pomp and solemnity in Westminster Abbey, where her tomb, together with that of the Duke of Buckingham, is still to be seen. It is unlikely that Lady Hatton attended the obsequies or that they gave her a moment's unhappiness. She had been busy not long before selling ordnance to the Government. She had disposed of sixteen brass pieces from Corfe Castle in the Isle of Purbeck.

<sup>1</sup> *Calendar of STATE PAPERS, Domestic, Charles I, vol. cc. 28.*

## XVII

### DEATH OF SIR EDWARD COKE

WHEN FRANCES HEARD OF THE DEATH OF THE DUKE OF Buckingham she had not dared to venture from her seclusion, because her mother-in-law remained ; but when the Countess of Buckingham died she began to wonder how this was going to affect her future. Would that warrant, after five years, be forgotten ? She was considering this when her father had a fall from his horse.

Sir Edward Coke made a note of the accident in his diary :

The 3rd of May, 1632, riding in the morning at Stoke, between eight and nine o'clock to take the air, my horse under me had a strange stumble backwards and fell upon me (being above eighty years old) where my head lighted near to sharp stubbles, and the heavy horse upon me. And yet by the providence of Almighty God, though I was in the greatest danger, yet I had not the least hurt, nay, no hurt at all. For Almighty God saith by his prophet David "the angel of the Lord tarrieth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them," et nomen Domini benedictum, for it is his work.

When Frances heard of the accident which her father at his great age had sustained, she went to him at Stoke Poges, and it is to be presumed that either she was tired of ruralizing in the heart of Clun Forest or that filial duty overcame all other emotions for the time being. It was rather late in the day to revive a sense of filial duty, but better then than not at all.

Five years had changed Frances. The lessons that contact with people had failed to teach her when she lived at Court had

## *The Lady of Bleeding Heart Yard*

been learnt in her social eclipse at Clun. It had been a life so unsuited to her nature that the very fact of being forced to live it had taught her patience, tolerance, and to expect little from other people. Perhaps this was why the Duke of Buckingham and his mother had not pursued her with warrant officers after her flight. They knew that she would suffer most by being left to what punishment isolation and loneliness could create for her. She was a subdued and chastened Frances when she left Clun to go to Stoke Poges.

There is nothing to show by what process Sir Edward Coke was induced to receive her. He had always been hard and unsympathetic whenever she had most needed his help. Perhaps he wanted someone to nurse him in his old age and thought she would do. That she was forbidden to go to Court did not matter to him. He was no *persona grata* there himself. Nor was he afraid of her arrest under that warrant in his house. It would be a bold officer who would dare to do it. Whether Frances was any happier at Stoke Poges than she had been at Clun is questionable. Her crotchety old father was a poor substitute for Sir Robert Howard ; but her conscience was clearer.

Law and obedience in very large capital letters were still Sir Edward Coke's watchwords. He was regular, punctual, and orderly. He hated anything out of time or place. He was a martinet in little things. These are the most difficult people with whom to live. They have so much more scope for action than the people who are martinets in big things ; and they are apt to be irritable if they cannot get their own way. And so Frances found it. But if she was to live with her father she must take him as he was. He was not at all easy to manage even as a patient. For a long time he would have nothing to do with doctors, which made it very difficult to know how his infirmities ought to be treated. Mr. Mead

## *Coke and the doctors*

wrote to Sir Martin Stuteville about this time, and his letter throws some light on Sir Edward Coke in this :

Sir Edward Coke being now very infirm in body, a friend of his sent him two or three doctors to regulate his health, whom he told that he had never taken physic since he was born, and would not now begin ; and that he had now upon him a disease which all the drugs of Asia, the gold of Africa, nor all the doctors of Europe could cure—old age. He therefore both thanked them and his friend that sent them, and dismissed them nobly with a reward of twenty pieces to each man.

There came, however, a time when he did have physicians to visit him, and this may have been brought about by the persuasions of Frances, on whom the care of him devolved.

As there were no Parliaments to occupy his attention, he spent much of his leisure on his legal writings and in preparing them for the Press. A new edition of his *Commentary on Littleton* was published. The King viewed his books with no little uneasiness. He sent word to Secretary Dorchester not long before the latter died to send to the Lord Keeper to suppress a book which His Majesty had heard Sir Edward Coke was in process of preparing, “in the which the King fears somewhat may be to the prejudice of his Prerogative, for he [Sir Edward Coke] is held too great an oracle amongst the people, and they may be misled by anything that carries such an authority as all things doth that he either speaks or writes, for the prevention of which His Majesty thinks it fit it [the book] should not come forth.”

The King also instructed Secretary Dorchester that he was to choose some trusty person to enquire about Sir Edward Coke's health so that should there be any immediate expectation of his demise his study could be sealed at once with all his papers in it “that use may be made of them for His Majesty's service, and some suppressed that may disserve him.”

## *The Lady of Bleeding Heart Yard*

In 1633 there was a rumour that Sir Edward Coke was dead. It went round Whitehall all one morning, and so engaged the attention of Lady Hatton that she persuaded one of her brothers—the Earl of Wimbledon—to go down with her to Stoke Poges to see for themselves whether it was true. She is suspected of wanting to take possession of Stoke Park before any other member of his family had time to do so. She and her brother got as far as Colnbrook and a bit beyond, when they met one of Sir Edward Coke's physicians coming from Stoke Poges and stopped the coach to speak with him. The physician told them "of his much amendment—some distemper he had fallen into for want of sleep but was now well again."

Lady Hatton promptly turned her coach about and went back to London, glad that her zeal for the future had not actually ushered her into the presence of a much-amended Sir Edward Coke.

He lived long enough afterwards to incur suspicion of having consulted with John Hampden—who was a neighbour—as to how the King's illegal taxes and other acts of oppression might be countered. And the King and Council ordered his house to be searched for papers in connection with this affair. Sir Francis Windebank, then Secretary of State, sent down a warrant to arrest the old lawyer if, when search was made, any seditious papers should be found.

The warrant arrived on September 1st, 1634. But it was never served on Sir Edward Coke. He was ill—too ill to know even that the warrant officers had come—and they searched his house while he lay there helpless. They searched it from top to bottom—every room and every corner except the one room where his life was ebbing away. They took all his precious papers and manuscripts, leaving nothing behind them—not so much as the wainscot box with his

## *Changes at Stoke Poges*

arms in which he kept his accounts and his revenues. He never knew of this cruel outrage. On September 3rd he was dead.

Six days later King Charles I was rifling a trunk taken from Sir Edward Coke's chambers in Holborn, and breaking it up to see what was in it. Among other things His Majesty found a few faded relics of Bridget Paston, and some of her jewellery, and "one paper of poetry to his children," but there were no seditious documents.

Sir Edward Coke was buried at Tittleshall, in Norfolk, where many of his family lie. And anyone who cares to visit the last resting-place of the man who made such strenuous efforts towards framing the British Constitution, and produced his masterpiece at the age of seventy-seven, will find his full-sized effigy on his tomb, and two long inscriptions—one in Latin and the other in English—commemorating his works and eulogizing their maker.

His death caused changes in the household at Stoke Poges. As soon as Lady Hatton went there Frances came away. This does not look as though Lady Hatton had forgiven her daughter. Quite likely the return of Frances to her father had not met with her mother's approval. At this point, however, there is a gap in the records, and all that is known leaves Lady Hatton in possession of Stoke Park, while Frances went with her son to Westminster—to lodge near the waterside over against Lambeth, but not too near the Archbishop's Palace.

There was consternation in the family when it was found that Sir Edward Coke's will was either non-existent or lost. It never was recovered—to the great prejudice of his heirs—and this resulted in an avalanche of claims descending on the State. Petitions poured in from the surviving sons and daughters of Bridget Coke, from Lady Hatton and Frances,

## *The Lady of Bleeding Heart Yard*

and from Sir Maurice Berkeley on behalf of Frances Berkeley, the only child of Lady Hatton's elder daughter, Elizabeth.

Lady Hatton laid claim to the manor of Stoke Park, and drew the attention of the Council to the fact that she had received no maintenance from Sir Edward Coke for the past seventeen years, since, in fact, the marriage of her daughter Frances ; and she pointed out the wrong done to her by using the money from the sale of the marriage of her stepdaughter, Frances Hatton, for the purchase of a manor—Minster Lovell—which had subsequently been taken from her and estated upon Arthur Coke, her husband's second son by Bridget Paston. She said that "many unhuman things followed, falsifying of conveyances, and other wrongs, which she put up with rather than the world should know of them, but she leaves the narrative of these and greater wrongs to her complaint at the Council table, and his breach of covenants since, which she confesses were not so well drawn by Sergeant Ashley as they should have been. He stripped her of all her apparel, not leaving as much as linen for her person allowing her never since any thing to live on, neither of her first husband's nor of his own estate a penny, which drove her into great debts and by delays which she received from him grew to that height that they were near trebled, that she was forced to sell besides jewels and household stuff as much land as is now worth between 3 and 4 thousand pounds per annum, and was constrained to buy his consent at last for the sale of them notwithstanding the order at Council table, with a goodly manor in Norfolk which she purchased of the King, called Fakenham, and a thousand pounds in gold the which after he had weighed and found to hold nought he accepted of. She forbore to relate the extremities which in this time she suffered but only wishes his soul in Heaven and herself quietness."

## *A new petition*

Sir Maurice Berkeley put a different complexion on the sale of the Fakenham manor and the £1,000 in gold. His Petition is among the State Papers in the Public Record Office (16/280 Year 1634, 13).

*To the Kings most Excellent Mat'ie*

The humble p'tion of S'r Maurice Berkley knt on the behalf of Frances Berkley an Infant the Onlie Daughter of Dame Elizabeth late wife of the said S'r Maurice eldest Daughter of S'r Edward Coke knt deceased by the Lady Hatton.

Humbly sheweth

That S'r Edward Cooke had by marriage with the Lady Hatton a very great estate and in consideracon thereof promised to assure all land purchased after marriage upon the Children betwixt them sonnes or Daughters, and had onelie two Daughters viz : the said Dame Elizabeth Berkeley and the nowe Viscountesse Purbeck.

That S'r Edw: upon the treaty of marriage betweene S'r Maurice and Dame Eliz: promised to give £4000 to S'r Maurice his father, and did settle about £1000 per ann'm upon him, But S'r Edw: after comitted to the Tower continued the Treaty till his Release, and then fell off, and only gave £3500, and for that drew Dame Eliz: to release her interest in £450 per annum Inheritance settled upon her and her sister, the revercon whereof was worth as much as the £3500.

That S'r Maurice to content his father and make up the £4000 promised, took up £500, wch he continued at interest 10 yeres, and then paid it himself.

That there were lands of £1300 per annum setled by S'r Edw: ; and the Lady Hatton had a great estate in land whereof a Moytie would have descended unto Dame Eliz: or her child, but S'r Edw: hath since cutt of the estate in the £1300 per ann'm and setled it all or most p'te upon the lady Purbeck.

That it was insisted upon before yo'r Mat'ie that S'r Edw: forebore to ioyne with the Lady Hatton in the sale of her lande, to th'end the Children might not be disinherited and soe much he promised S'r Maurice Berkeley and to that purpose coven'ted wth



## *The Lady of Bleeding Heart Yard*

the late Duke of Buckingham to doe noe act whereby the discent to the Lady Purbeck should be hindred Yet for £1000 in money and the Manno'r of Fakenham given him by the Lady Hatton ioyned wth her in sale soe as noe benefitt to those lands can come to the said Infant.

That S'r Edw: gave in marriage wth the Lady Purbeck £10000 in money, assured lands of £1300 per ann'm or thereabout besides 2000 m'ks a yere for p'sent maintenance.

That when S'r Edw: had obteyned the said Mann'r and £1000 he p'fessed he had then a provision for the Infant.

The p'mises Considered, and forasmuch as at the hearing before Yo'r Mat'ie it was alleadged on all sides that provision for Children was ever intended, and for that Dame Eliz: (being the eldest) hath not had any advancem'nt out of S'r Edw: Cookes estate, nor from her Mother the Lady Hatton, who hath sold her land, but is utterly disinherited, and yet the Lady Purbeck (being the youngest) had soe great a porcon, it being reasonable, that if reliefe be given to the Lady Hatton upon agreem'nte for the benefitt of her and her Children, That the Lady Berkeley and her Child (who are in effect disinherited by both, and without any demerrit) should be considered. And for that S'r Maurice did paye £500 and the interest for 10 yeres of his wive's porcon. Humbly beseech yo'r Mat'ie to take the same into yo'r royall Consideracon and to vouchsafe the pet'er such reliefe as to your Mat'ie in yo'r princely wisdome shall seeme meete.

And yo'r pet'er (as in duty bound) shall ever pray for your Mat'ie S'e.

The Council and the King appear to have given Lady Hatton most of her dowry—or at any rate what remained of it—from Sir William Hatton, and she certainly had possession of Sir Edward Coke's house at Stoke Poges. Her eloquence at the Council table and the wrongs she had reserved for her appearance there had their usual effect. For the sake of peace everyone conceded all that was possible to Lady Hatton.

## *Frances under arrest*

Besides, it was said that the old lawyer had amassed so much wealth that he had been able to settle in life all his sons with good estates and ample fortunes. They were not allowed to have his papers and manuscripts, however, and it was fully seven years before the Long Parliament, in 1641, ordered these to be returned to his family.

Lady Hatton had sold Corfe Castle to the new Attorney-General—Sir John Banks—a lawyer who had amassed a handsome fortune, and who was able to pay the price of the magnificent property ; for Lady Hatton knew how to drive a bargain, and was a match for any lawyer living. She became more active than ever after Sir Edward Coke died. For the first time in thirty-six years she had command of her own fortune, and could arrange comfortably for her future with relief from financial worries. It really seemed as though she were nearing the end of her troubles. With Hatton House as a town residence and Stoke Park for a home in the country, she began to feel some degree of security.

And then, just as she was planning everything so nicely, the most alarming news reached her from London. Frances had been arrested under the old warrant, and was imprisoned in the Gatehouse.

## XVIII

### *FRANCES FORMS NEW ALLIES*

WHEN FRANCES WENT TO WESTMINSTER SHE THOUGHT SHE was safe. The two years with her father at Stoke Poges had given her confidence. She had now had eight years' respite. Eight years is a long time—long enough to give an illusion of security—but the worst of warrants is that they do not lapse. They are as valid at the end of twenty years as they are at the end of one. There was no hope for her.

Though her two chief enemies were dead in the persons of the Duke of Buckingham and the Countess his mother, the rest of the Villiers family remained, and their feelings chose to be outraged when Frances had the temerity to return to London. Moreover, King Charles I knew how anxious his friend "Steenie" had been that Frances should do penance, and though "Steenie" was no longer there to see it, his wishes should be respected.

Sir Robert Howard was also in London, though he was not at Westminster. He was at Suffolk House with his family, and it was not his fault that the King and the Villiers family thought that he was too near Frances.

By this time William Laud was Archbishop of Canterbury, and so was lodged at Lambeth. He mentions the matter in his diary. Speaking of Frances and Sir Robert Howard he says :

They grew to such boldness that he brought her up to London and lodged her in Westminster. This was so near the Court and

## *Archbishop Laud in pursuit*

in so open view that the King and the Lords took notice of it as a thing full of impudence that they should so publicly adventure to outface the Justice of the Realm in so foul a business. And one day as I came of course to wait on His Majesty, he took me aside and told me of it, being then Archbishop of Canterbury; and added that it was a great reproach to the Church and Nation; and that I neglected my Duty in case I did not take order for it. I made answer she was the Wife of a Peer of the Realm; and that without his leave I could not attach her; but that now I knew His Majesty's pleasure I would do my best to have her taken and brought to Penance according to the sentence against her.

The next day I had the good hap to apprehend both her and Sir Robert Howard; and by Order of the High Commission Court imprisoned her in the Gate House and him in the Fleet. This was (as far as I remember) upon a Wednesday; and the Sunday seven-night after was thought to bring her to Penance. She was much troubled at it, and so was he.

There is corroboration of the latter part of the Archbishop's statements in a letter from the Reverend George Garrard to Lord Wentworth, Lord Deputy in Ireland. Lord Wentworth afterwards was the Earl of Strafford.

Here is a business new revived. Your Lordship hath heard of a strong friendship betwixt Sir Robert Howard and the Lady Purbeck, for which she was called into the High Commission, and there sentenced to stand in a sheet in the Savoy Church, which she avoided then by flight, and hath not been much looked after since, having lived much out of Town, and constantly these last two years with her father at Stoke until he died; but this winter she lodged herself on the waterside over against Lambeth, I fear too near the road of the Archbishop's barge; whereof some complaint being made, she had a Serjeant-at-Arms sent with a Warrant from the Lord of the Council to carry her to the Gatehouse, whence she will hardly get out until she have done her Penance. The same night

## *The Lady of Bleeding Heart Yard*

was a Warrant sent, signed by the Lords, to the Warden of the Fleet, to take Sir Robert Howard at Suffolk House, and to carry him to the Fleet.

My Lord your humblest Servant  
G. GARRARD.

*March the 17th 1635*  
*St. Patrick's Day.*

Frances was horror-struck when, in her quiet lodging at Westminster, the Archbishop's Serjeant-at-Arms came with his warrant to arrest her. But in spite of the fever of agitation in which she was thrown she was none the less determined not to walk barefoot in a white sheet to please anyone. It was difficult to know how she was going to avoid this unpleasant episode, but no doubt some inspiration would come to her.

She had not far to go from her lodging to the Gatehouse, but the sight of the accommodation prepared for her there made her regret the change. The Gatehouse was the chief prison for the City of Westminster, and stood near the west end of the Abbey. It was built in the reign of Edward III (1330-77) from which may be inferred how high and strong and forbidding it looked, and how cold and dark and uncomfortable it was. It consisted originally of two great gates adjoining each other, one towards the north out of College Court—afterwards called Great Dean's Yard—and the other towards the west. An almsbox stood at the prison door for the benefit of prisoners, and when, during school hours, any of the Westminster boys were caught playing games with money they were sent "under a trusty guard" to put their gains into the almsbox. Dr. Johnson described the Gatehouse in his day as an offensive building—with which, no doubt, the prisoners agreed—and a continual nuisance to neighbours and passengers. It was ordered to be pulled down in 1776, together with the almshouses that stood

## *Frances in the Gatehouse*

beside it, as being thoroughly out of date and an eyesore to London.

It had been out of date and an eyesore when Frances was confined in it a hundred and forty years before, and was the very last place she would have chosen for an enforced retirement. It was not in any way to be compared with the aldermen's houses in which she had been confined before, and there was not the remotest chance of forcing a way out. Once in the Gatehouse there was no escape. Frances wondered what inspiration would come to her to evade her penance.

She had not much time to wait for inspiration. The penance was fixed for the following Sunday week. Nevertheless, she did her best. She had a way with her that could not be denied. Sir Robert Howard never left off loving her. The Viscount Purbeck was overfond of her and far too indulgent—if his own family are to be believed. The material at the Gatehouse was certainly unprepossessing. Gaolers are not chosen for their charms. But she proceeded to use her blandishments on them all, and with such good effect that in spite of the short time at her disposal they rapidly took the view that she was an ill-used lady. The turnkey in particular was much impressed.

In the meantime Sir Robert Howard had been taken to the Fleet, the Warden escorting him from Suffolk House in person, and from there he was ordered to attend the next court day of the High Commission sitting in London. He hated the sight of the Fleet, which is not surprising, but whether he hated it or not he could not get out of it.

Before long he and Frances were summoned before the High Commission Court. This was on April 16th, 1635. Sir Robert Howard duly appeared, though in the opinion of Dr. Rives, the King's Advocate, his answers to questions left

## *The Lady of Bleeding Heart Yard*

much to be desired. He was accordingly sent back to the Fleet and admonished to appear next court day to receive the further order that would be made.

There was trouble, however, with Frances. Mr. Aquila Weekes, the redoubtable Keeper of the Gatehouse, could do nothing with her. When she ought to have been ready to accompany him to court she was not even dressed. Like Venus rising from the foam, she was as lovely as an angel, but not suitably clad for appearing abroad, and what was more she refused to mend matters. Nothing that Mr. Aquila Weekes could threaten, or his subordinates devise, had the slightest effect. The time came to start. Frances was still in *status quo*, and Mr. Aquila Weekes found himself in the embarrassing position of having to appear without her, which made him look rather foolish, especially as all he could tell the court was that "the Viscountess was unwilling to come thither, for that she wanted clothes fitting for her to come abroad in."

Sentence was read against her in her absence, and she was ordered to be brought to the Church of St. Clement Danes without Temple Bar on Sunday next come sen'night, according "as shall be prescribed," and Dr. Rives was ordered to put in new articles against her for infidelity since the former sentence of the court.

On April 23rd Sir Robert Howard was again brought up and the matter adjourned. He was told to appear yet a third time to receive final judgment. Mr. Aquila Weekes arrived once more without Frances, and she was ordered "to do penance upon pain." She received the sentence with her usual spirit. She would *not* do penance upon pain.

Sir Robert Howard had succeeded in getting in touch with a friend who lived in Hampshire. The friend's name is in Archbishop Laud's diary, but it is so indistinct that it has to

## *Frances flies to France*

be passed over. It is a pity that his memory, therefore, cannot be revived, though full justice can be done to what he did. He readily helped Sir Robert Howard to mature plans which, with devoted chivalry, the latter was making for the release of Frances. How they managed to do so has not come to light, but the upshot of their arrangements was that the friend from Hampshire came prowling round the Gatehouse, and angled a little with Lady Purbeck's gaolers. Fortunately he landed the turnkey who was already one of her admirers. For a *douceur* the turnkey was quite disposed to give a practical demonstration of his sympathy, and, encouraged by a deposit on account, listened attentively to the unfolding of the friend from Hampshire's plans. When a suitable moment presented itself he conveyed—or caused to be conveyed—to Frances a résumé of what he had heard.

The next time the friend from Hampshire visited his new acquaintance he found a young man in the offing. A charming young man with fair hair who, without preamble or any unnecessary delay, placed himself under the escort of the friend from Hampshire, and hurried with him from the Gatehouse. As at that time men wore curls and plumed hats, high boots and ample cloaks, it was quite an easy disguise for Frances to assume.

It was one thing to run away with Sir Robert Howard to Shropshire, and quite another to be escorted to the coast by his friend from Hampshire, but there was no safety at present in England, and with her usual courage and determination Frances was facing exile.

She went to France.

In those days the Channel crossing was accomplished in row boats or sailing vessels, and it was necessary to wait for tides and winds and other things, so there was a period of anxious waiting at the coast before she could embark ; but it



## *The Lady of Bleeding Heart Yard*

passed without danger, and she at last set sail for Guernsey ; and thence to St. Malo, and in due course arrived safely in France.

When the momentous Sunday arrived there was—as on the former occasion—no Lady Purbeck in a white sheet walking to St. Clement Danes, and the King, the Council and the Archbishop of Canterbury were made to look foolish.

The news of her escape from the Gatehouse reached Archbishop Laud the very next morning. He relates that Sir Robert Howard's friend from Hampshire "with Money corrupted the Turn Key of the Prison (so they call him) and conveyed the Ladie Foorth, and after that into France in Man's Apparell (as that Knight hath since made his Boast). This was told me the Morning after the Escape : And you must think, the Goode Fellowship of the Town was glad of it.

"In the meantime I could not but know, though not perhaps prove as then, that Sir Robert Howard laboured and Contrived this Conveyance. And thereupon in the next sitting of the High Commission, ordered him to be close Prisoner till he brought the Ladie Foorth. So he continued Prisoner about some two or three Months."

It was on April 30th that Sir Robert Howard was again brought before the court, but he refused to say where the lady was or how he had contrived her escape. He was immediately sent back to the Fleet, and Dr. Rives was required to put in articles against the Keeper of the Gatehouse and his servants and watchmen. It was all very well for Frances, but what about the people who had helped her to escape, and who were left behind to bear the brunt of the storm ? Mr. Aquila Weekes and his watchmen bore the full force of it. The former was, by order of the court,

## *No news of Frances*

suspended from the execution of his place of Keeper or Warden of the Gatehouse, and was sent to join Sir Robert Howard in the Fleet. As for the turnkey, his sympathy lost him his job.

The Rev. G. Garrard had plenty to tell Lord Wentworth in his next letter :

No News yet of the Lady Purbeck since her Escape out of the Gatehouse ; but Sir Robert Howard lies by it still close Prisoner in the Fleet, being so committed from the High Commission Court, until he shall bring her Foorth, who being there cannot do it, for he sees Nobody, and if he were out would not do it ; so that he is miserable and like to pay dear for his unlawful pleasures.

My Lord Vere died the day after your Brother went hence, at Sir Harry Vane's Table at Dinner, being taken with an Apoplexy as he sat calling for fresh Salmon.

My Lord of Northumberland was installed on the 13th of this Month, at Windsor. Never Subject of this Kingdom rode better attended from his House than he did, nor performed the business more nobly or more sumptuously. The king, queen, and prince stood at my Lord Wimbledon's in the Strand ; thirteen Earls and a Marquis rode with him, besides almost all the young Nobility and many Barons. I must not forget the Lord Cottington, who was very rich in Jewels, and his Feathers, but in the Spanish way, and a competent number of the Gentry, near an hundred Horse in all, besides his Servants, who were fifty, costly and bravely clothed beyond any that hath been seen ; four Pages all Earls' Sonnes ; twelve Footmen ; two brave Coaches with four in Livery to drive them. The Garter is grown a dear Honour ; few will be able to follow this Pattern.

Shall I tell yourself that Banks, the Attorney General hath been commended unto His Majesty—that he exceeds Bacon in Eloquence—Chancellor Ellesmere in Judgement—and William Noy in Law : High Praises. Pray God he answer his Expectations that so praised him. The late Treasurer (Weston Earl of Portland) hath gained also an high Praise for the Manner of his dying.

## *The Lady of Bleeding Heart Yard*

*The Reverend G. Garrard to the Lord Wentworth*

24th June  
1635

Sir Robert Howard, after one Moneth's close Imprisonment in the Fleet, obtained his Liberty, giving £2000 Bond never more to come at Lady Purbeck, wherein he stands bound alone ; but for his Appearance within Thirty Dayes, if he be called, two of his Brothers stand bound for him in £1500, so I hope there is an End of the Business.

*The Reverend G. Garrard to the Lord Wentworth*

30th July  
1635

. . . The Lady Purbeck is in some part of France, where I wish she may stay, but it seems not good so to the higher Powers : for there is of late an Express Messenger sent to seek her with the Privy Seal of His Majesty to summon her to England, within Six Weeks after the receipt thereof, which if she do not obey she is to be proceeded against according to the Laws of the Kingdom.

Fortunately for Frances she had friends in France, and she had not been there long before she had many more. Frances was nothing if not eloquent, and she seemed such a pathetic figure—all alone and driven from her home and family into exile for so old an indiscretion. Of course, according to her, she was innocent until the persecutions of her husband's family caused her to run away with Sir Robert Howard. Now she was repentant and anxious to atone. It was small wonder that the French Court upheld her and promised to do everything possible to obtain her pardon.

Louis XIII and his Queen, Anne of Austria, espoused her cause ; and she had only to mention the iniquities of the Duke of Buckingham to have Cardinal Richelieu on her side. He had his own opinion about the Duke of Buckingham, and was quite ready to believe the worst she could relate. Her

## *Sir Kenelm Digby*

story lost nothing in the telling. Cardinal Richelieu was so moved by it that he went to considerable trouble, with the potency of the Church behind him, to ask King Charles for her pardon. But King Charles was not to be persuaded. Then instructions came from the French Court to the Ambassador at St. James's to use what zeal he could to further the matter at Whitehall, which he did, but to no purpose. Frances lodged herself openly in a house in Paris, not far from the residence of the British Ambassador, and awaited developments.

The British Ambassador was Lord Scudamore. He did not altogether relish the position, and could have wished that Frances had stayed at home. If he appeared to uphold the attitude of the French royal family, he would offend King Charles, and if he showed too great an indifference towards their opinion, he would offend King Louis—and still worse, Cardinal Richelieu. He retired behind the screen of diplomacy.

There were then as there are now a good many English people living in Paris, and Frances found friends among them. The most enthusiastic of these friends was Sir Kenelm Digby. By this time Sir Kenelm Digby was a widower, Venetia, Lady Digby having died in 1633. For two or three years after her death he had retired to the quiet of Gresham College in London, and had there studied chemistry. He had then gone to Paris. His grief for his wife's death remained unabated, and showed itself outwardly in some eccentricity of costume. He kept his locks unshorn, and instead of the elegant pointed beard of the period, he wore his as nature intended it to grow, and as he was a very large man with a very large beard, there is no doubt he was somewhat conspicuous. Add to this a voluminous mourning cloak and a high-cornered hat, and he looked more like a lion, a hermit or an alchemist than a courtier. For all that he was the most

## *The Lady of Bleeding Heart Yard*

accomplished of courtiers, and had it not been for his inability to agree with the Duke of Buckingham, and for that little contretemps about privateering—downright piracy it was really—he might still have been resident at Whitehall. He was a great traveller, and it was not for lack of advertising himself that he did not pass for a greater. He was something of a scientist, an astrologer, and was certainly one of the “characters” of his day.

This large ally took the woes of Frances very much to heart. He wrote to Lord Conway, who was a friend of his, desiring the peers to help her to return. After alluding to other matters, he mentioned the Earl of Wimbledon, who was one of Lady Hatton’s brothers, and then proceeded to speak of his niece :

But none sure will be more famous and admirable to our Nevewes then the noble valiaunt and ingenious Peere lord Wimbledone ; whose epistle exceedeth all that ever was done before by any so victorious a generall of armies or so provident a governor of townes. I onely lament for it that it was not hatched in a season when it might have done the honor of Baronius his collections to have bin inserted among them.

Here is a lady that he hath reason to detest above all persons in the worlde, if robbing a man of all the portion of witt, courage, generousnesse, and other heroicall partes due to him, do meritt such an inclination of the minde towards them that have thus bereaved them : for surely the Genius that governeth that family, and that distributeth to each of them their shares of natures guiftes, was either asleepe or mistooke (or somewhat else was the cause) when he gave my lady of Purbieke a dubble proportion of these and all other noble endowments, and left her poore Uncle so naked and unfurnished. Truly my lord to speak seriously I have not seene more Prudence, sweetenesse, goodnesse, honor, and bravery shewed by any woman that I knowe, then this unfortunate lady sheweth she hath a rich stocke of. Besides her naturall endowments, doubtlessly her afflictions adde much ; or rather have polished, refined,

## *A writ from King Charles*

and heightened what nature gave her ; and you knowe vexatio dat intellectum.

Is it not a shame for you Peeres (and neere about the king) that you will lett so brave a lady live as she doth in distress and banishment ; when her exile serveth strangers but to conceive scandalously of our nation, that we will not permitt those to live among us who have so much worth, and goodnesse as this lady giveth show of ? I have nothing meritting to send you in returne of her excellent Uncle's Epistle ; . . .

Yr: Lo: most humble and affectionate servant

KENELME DIGBY.

*Paris the last of Jan: 1636.*

He had been bred a Catholic, had changed to Protestantism, and then gone back again to being a Catholic—which may have had something to do with his residence in Paris—and it was not long before he was pointing out to the distressed lady that a change of religion in her own case seemed to him to be indicated. Cardinal Richelieu was also of this opinion, and Lady Purbeck promised to consider the matter. Sir Kenelm Digby even went so far as to write Frances a book, the better to assist her conversion, and called it *A Conference With A Lady About Choice Of Religion*. This book was published in 1638, but the manuscript of it is dated Paris, January 13th, 1636, and is now in the British Museum. It is dedicated *To The Right Honourable My Most Honoured And Singular Good Lady The Lady Frances Viscountesse Purbiecke*.

For Frances to change her religion was not at all the way to propitiate King Charles, and he remained adamant. He ordered that his writ be served on the Lady Purbeck commanding her to return to England, and he was much displeased that the French Court should presume to tell him what to do with one of his own subjects. Lord Scudamore was applied to with instructions to carry out the royal decree.

Lord Scudamore has left the letter—it is among the State

## *The Lady of Bleeding Heart Yard*

Papers (Foreign) of the reign of Charles I—in which he told the Secretary of State, Sir John Coke, how he had endeavoured to fulfil his duty :

24 March 4th April

1636

Rt. Hon'ble

Your Honour's Letters dated the 7th March I received the 21st the same style by the Courier sent to serve His Majestie's Writt uppon the Ladie Purbecke. They came to me about 11 of the Clocke in the Morning. Uppon the Instant of his coming to me I sent a Servant of myne own to show him the House, where the Ladie lives publiquely, and in myne own neighbourhood.

The Courier taking off his Messenger's Badge knocked att the Doore to get in. There came a Mayed to the Doore that would not open itt, but peeped through a Gratinge and asked his Busines. He sayd, he was not in such Haste but he could come again to-morrow. But the Mayd and the Rest of the Household having charge not to open the Doore but to such as were well knowne, the Messenger could not gett in.

In the Afternoone I understoode that the Ladie had received Notice 15 Dayes before, that a Privy Seale was to come for her, which had caused her ever since to keep her House close. We endeavoured by severall Wayes to have gotten the Messenger into the House. But having considered and tryed till the next Daye in the Afternoone, we grew verie doubtfull that the Messenger might be suspected and that the Ladie might slip away from that place of her Residence that Night.

I directed this Bearer to put the Box with the Privy Seale in it through some Pane of a lower Window into the House and leaving it there to putt on his Badge and knocking att the Doore of the House if they would not suffer him to enter, then to tell that Party, whoe should speak with him at the doore, that he was sent from the King of Grate Britaine to serve His Majesty's Writt uppon the Ladie Viscountess Purbecke, and that in regard he could not bee admitted in, he had left the Privy Seale in a Box in such a Place of the House, and that in His Majestie's Name he required the Ladie Purbecke to take Notice thereof att her Perill.

## *Richelieu to the rescue*

The Messenger being there, found an Upper Window neath the Casements open, and threw upp the Box with the Privy Seale in it through that Window into a Chamber, which some say is the Ladie's Dining Roome, others that it is a Chamber of a Man Servant waiting upon her.

The Courier returns to me. And finding that he had forgotten to speake at the Doore as I had directed him, I caused him presentlie to retourne and to discharge himselfe in such sort as is above mentioned which he will depose he did.

A Woman being sent to the House under Colour of speaking with a Sister of hers the Ladie's Servant the Ladie herselfe came downe to the Doore, and opening it a little soe that the Woman saw her, she sayd her Sister should have leave to goe home to her that Night. And therefore the Ladie was in the House att the same Time that the Place of her Residence was served. She hath lived in that House about a Moneth, and there are (as I am informed) no other Dwellers in it but herselfe.

The Morrow after this was done about Midnight there came some Officers with twoe Coaches and 50 Archers to divers Houses to Search for the Ladie, being directed and instructed by a Warrant from the Cardinal (Richelieu) that whereas there was a Messenger sent from England to offer some Affront to your Ladie Purbecke in diminution of this King's Jurisdiction, that therefore they should find outt the sayd Ladie and protect her.

Coming to the Knowledge of this Particular this Morning I thought Good to hasten the Messenger outt of the Waye.

And so ended any further effort on the part of King Charles to serve a writ on the Lady Purbeck. If the sympathies of the French Government were going to be so aggressive as to send two coaches and fifty archers to her assistance under colour of accusing the English King of interfering with the French King's jurisdiction, matters might become more serious than Charles I considered Frances was worth. Under these circumstances his writ fell a little flat, but he still refused to have the lady in England. If the French were so fond of her, let them keep her.



## *The Lady of Bleeding Heart Yard*

There is another letter about this time written to Sir R. Puckering from which more is learnt of the French Government's activities :

The last week we had certain News that the Ladie Purbecke was declared a Papist. The French King and the Queen and His Eminence Cardinal Richelieu have sent messages or Letters to King Charles, begging him to pardon my Ladie Purbecke and to allow her to return to England. The French Ambassador at St. James's is verie Zealous in the Business. It is said she is altogether advised by Sir Kenelm Digby who indeed hath written over Letters to some of his noble Friends of the Privy Council wherein he hath set down what a Convert this Ladie is become, so superlatively virtuous and sanctimonious as the like hath never been seen in Men or Women ; and therefore he does most humbly desire their Lordships to farther this Ladie's Peace, and that she may return into England, for otherwise she doth resolve to put herself into some Monastery. I hear His Majesty doth utterly dislike that the Ladie is so directed by Sir Kenelm Digby, and that she fares nothing better for it.

Though Frances threatened to put herself into some monastery, it was with no intention of taking the veil. Reasons of economy dictated the measure. She was in rather distress of circumstances, because ever since she had gone to Shropshire with Sir Robert Howard her allowance from the Duke of Buckingham had ceased, and she had never been able to obtain from the Villiers family any renewal of it. They had taken possession of her means and refused to give them up. Her father had attended to her wants while she was with him at Stoke Poges, but after his death she had only the sum allowed her from his estate. It was not large, because he had already advanced her a marriage portion, and, by the time Lady Hatton and his children by Bridget Paston and the daughter of Sir Maurice Berkeley had all shared out the residue, her proportion was inconsiderable.

## *Frances leaves the nunnery*

So she gave up her house in the same street as the British Ambassador ; and Cardinal Richelieu with hopeful zeal for her spiritual welfare persuaded the Lady Abbess of the English nunnery in Paris to take her in en pension terms. The English nunnery was in the Faubourg St. Marceau, alongside the Fosse, and was a gloomy-looking place. It overhung the wide moat that surrounded Paris, and was hemmed in by mediæval walls and towers, and narrow streets and arches. It was not the sort of building in which Frances had any intention of making her permanent home. It was too reminiscent of the Gatehouse. There were the same gratings in the doors, and the same dankness inside, and the same feeling of restriction and detention. There is a degree of rigidity about the rules of a convent which after a while becomes monotonous to people with no leaning towards the conventual life, and Frances was one of those people. It was not long before she was breaking the rules that seemed to her unnecessary, and feeling unutterably bored. In fact, she was for so short a time in the English nunnery that Cardinal Richelieu must have been rather disappointed.

Three months after Lord Scudamore's long letter to Sir John Coke describing how he had endeavoured to carry out His Majesty's command to serve the Privy Seal on Lady Purbeck—at which time she had not entered the nunnery—he was writing to Secretary Windebank, to tell him that Frances had already left it : “ July, 1636.—The Lady Purbecke is come Foorth of the English Nunnerie. For, the Ladie Abbess being from Home, somebody forgott to provide the Ladie Purbecke her dynner, and to leave the Roome open where she used to dine att Night ; expostulating with the Ladie Abbess, they agreed to part fairely, which the Ladie Abbess was the more willing unto in regard the Ladie Purbecke

## *The Lady of Bleeding Heart Yard*

did not live according to that strictness as was expected. Cardinal Richelieu helped her into the Nunnerie."

Sir Kenelm Digby continued to give her spiritual advice, but she soon made it clear to him that she could better concentrate on the good of her soul when her body was not in exile. She wanted to be forgiven that penance and allowed to return to England. Nothing else would do. Sir Kenelm Digby accordingly did what he could, but he was not the best of advocates, having a somewhat comprehensive reputation and a well-known appreciation of beautiful women which rather discounted his judgment.

Lord Scudamore thought that Frances was "expecting every day Sir Robert Howard here," and was ready to report at once if he came. But Sir Robert Howard had been ordered to Audley End and the next that was heard of him was that he had followed Frances—not to Paris, but into the Roman Catholic Church. The Rev. G. Garrard hastened to inform Lord Wentworth of the matter as soon as it got abroad: "Another of my familiar Acquaintance hath gone over to the Popish Religion, Sir Robert Howard, which I am very sorry for, my Ladie Purbecke left her Country and her Religion both together, and since he will not leave thinking of her but live in that detestable Sin, let him go to that Church for Absolution, for Comfort he can find none in ours.—(April 27th, 1636-7.)"

There is reason to believe that some time later King Charles lifted his embargo, and the Lady Viscountess Purbeck was forgiven her penance and allowed to come home. And there is a suspicion—hardly more—that what the King and Queen of France, Cardinal Richelieu, the French Ambassador in England and Sir Kenelm Digby could not do between them may have been accomplished by the Viscount Purbeck.

## XIX

### *THE CIVIL WAR BEGINS*

THERE IS A STATEMENT IN COLES'S MANUSCRIPTS (vol. xxxiii, p. 17) that "Lord Purbeck after 16 years took his wife again, and owned the Son." The writer of this statement lived in the eighteenth century, and made the mistake of calling Frances a Danvers, and of saying that her son Robert married a Bertie. The maiden name of Frances was Coke and that of her son's wife was Danvers. These mistakes can be rectified easily, but it is not so easy to prove that Lord Purbeck took his wife again and owned the son. That he did not take her back after sixteen years is certain, but sixteen may have been merely a slip of the pen for a higher number. There is some suspicion that this eighteenth-century writer was acting on the side of Robert's descendant, who was a claimant for the Purbeck peerage, and so may have been biased.

There is another statement, also eighteenth century, details of which are to be found among the papers belonging to the Purbeck Peerage Claim at the British Museum. This appears to take the opposite side, and states :

The information of Mr Anstis, Garter King at Arms, 1723, He told the Claimant that he had in his custody a printed case of James Earl of Castlehaven, Francis Lord Brodrib ; and Edward Cary Esq, in behalf of their wives, who were the granddaughters by a daughter of Christopher Earl of Anglesea, which was designed against the petition of John (Villiers, descendant of Robert son of the First Viscountess Purbeck) in 1720.

## *The Lady of Bleeding Heart Yard*

The Case sets forth that John Viscount Purbeck married the daughter of Sir Edward Coke ; and that not long after the inter-marriage he was caused to live apart from his lady by reason of distraction of mind and weakness of body, and was confined at his physician's house 40 miles from London, and never after cohabited with her.

There is probably a good deal of chaff to be sifted from the grain in both these statements.

It is possible that the Viscount Purbeck, in one of his lucid moments, hearing that Frances had joined the Church of which he had long been a member, and that she was in straitened circumstances in Paris, may have suggested to King Charles that he would like to have her back again if she would come. It is equally possible that King Charles consented, for it was one thing to allow the lady to come back to her husband, and quite another to run the risk of her return to Sir Robert Howard. Frances herself may have suggested returning to the Viscount Purbeck as preferable to remaining for ever in exile, but the whole thing is absolute conjecture.

In 1640 Frances was certainly in England. In that year she prepared a petition to the Lords in Parliament craving their Lordships' intercession with the King for her Pardon, and asking for the return of her marriage portion, which had been confiscated by Lady Denbigh. In her petition she passed over the five years during which she was in Shropshire, and adopted a tone of injured innocence as to her alleged infidelity. There is nothing to indicate from her petition that Frances had returned to her husband, but the inference seems to be that she had not. She admitted nothing.<sup>1</sup>

In that year—1640—the Viscount Purbeck was disordered, and in the care of a servant. A draft made by Secretary Windebank of a letter from the King on behalf of the Viscount

<sup>1</sup> (Note) see *Appendix*.

## *The King's care of Purbeck*

Purbeck appears among the State Papers (Domestic) of the reign (vol. ccclxiii, 65).

*The King on behalf of John Villiers Viscount Purbeck.*

*Oatlands.*

*August 10th 1640.*

We, understanding that Viscount Purbeck is now remaining in your house, have thought good hereby to require you to take a special care of him and his diet ; and to persuade him to abstain from all excesses which may cause indisposition. And we further require you to advise Mr Nurse, who is usually his Physician, concerning his infirmity, and to follow carefully such rules as he shall prescribe for his health. And our care for the preservation of his estate being no less then that of his health we furthermore require and command you to use your best endeavours to dissuade him from all exorbitancy in his expenses and from disposing of any part of his estate without the consent of his friends, assuring you we shall expect from you an exact performance and account of this our commands.

Less than two months later the King instructed Secretary Windebank to write to the Viscount Purbeck's servant :

*Secretary Windebank to Viscount Purbeck's Servant.*

*October 1st 1640*

His Majesty understanding that Viscount Purbeck is of late more subject to distemper then formerly has commanded me to signify his pleasure to you that you take special care to keep from him all things that may increase his distemper, not suffering him to fall into excess of wine, tobacco, or any other thing that may be hurtful to him. His Majesty will expect your exact performance of this command, according to the princely care he takes of the Viscount.

From this it does not seem to be indicated that Frances was with him.

## *The Lady of Bleeding Heart Yard*

In the same year Frances had the satisfaction of seeing her enemy, William Laud, Archbishop of Canterbury, committed to the Tower, and made to pay a fine to Sir Robert Howard for sending him to be close kept in the Fleet five years earlier. Archbishop Laud put it down in his diary :

*October 27th, Simon and Jude's Eve.*

I went into my upper Study, to see some Manuscripts which I was sending to Oxford. In that Study hung my picture taken from the Life ; and coming in I found it fallen down upon the Face and lying on the Floor, the String being broken by which it hanged against the Wall. I am almost every Day threatened with my Ruin in Parliament. God grant this be no Omen.

*December 18th, Friday.*

I was accused by the House of Commons for High Treason without any particular Charge laid against me. Mr Holles was the man that brought up the Message from the Lords. Soon after the Charge was brought into the Upper House by Scots Commissioners tending to prove me an Incendiary, upon which I was presently committed to the Gentleman Usher. I was permitted to go in his Company to Lambeth for a Book or two to read in. I stayed at Lambeth till the Evening to avoid the gazing of the People.

*December 21st, Monday.*

I was fined £500 in the Parliament House and Sir John Lambe and Sir Henry Martin £250 apiece, for keeping Sir Robert Howard close Prisoner in the Case of the Escape of the Viscountess Purbecke out of the Gatehouse. In such a Case say the Imprisonment was more than the Law allowed, what may be done for Honour and Religion Sake ?

*December 23rd, Wednesday.*

The Lords ordered me to pay the Money presently which was done. I was forced to sell Plate to pay where I borrowed it.

## *A new Bishop of Ely*

The Archbishop did not live long after he was committed to prison. In January, 1645, he was beheaded.

Lady Hatton had been having renewed trouble with the Bishop of Ely. John Francis White, the late Bishop, had died, and in 1638 a new prelate had come to take his place. Lady Hatton had quelled John Francis White and hoped for the best when his successor arrived ; but, as was usual with all new bishops who held the see, the prelate was determined to remove Lady Hatton by hook or by crook. He was one Matthew Wren—uncle of the architect, Sir Christopher Wren—and he was a person of a very tenacious disposition. With all the zeal of a new broom he proceeded to sweep, confident that what his predecessors had not been able to do he would have little difficulty in achieving.

He began by reviving proceedings in the Court of Requests, and, having gone carefully into the questions in dispute, decided that if he found the money to pay off the mortgage Lady Hatton would have to vacate the property. Accordingly he produced the money in court. Lady Hatton took as much notice of the Bishop, his money and the Court of Requests as she did of the mortgage—which was nil ; and to show Matthew Wren how little she troubled herself about anything he might do, gave orders for cutting down certain trees on the place which she considered had become rather overgrown. And she arranged for the removal of some leadwork for which she had no further use.

Bishop Wren could hardly believe it possible that the weight of the see of Ely should be so set aside. He delivered an ultimatum to Lady Hatton about her activities in disposing of non-removables, and threatened the direst of consequences in case she continued to disobey. He might never have existed. She went on with her work—lopped, topped, and



## *The Lady of Bleeding Heart Yard*

removed wherever she had a mind—and turned a deaf ear to anyone who ventured to express any sort of criticism. The Bishop was beside himself. He set on foot further proceedings, and obtained an injunction against Lady Hatton to restrain her from interfering with what he was pleased to consider the property of the see of Ely. He might just as well have saved the see the expense. Lady Hatton took no more notice of him and his injunction than she had taken of him and his money. The Bishop could bear it no longer. He obtained her arrest and had her committed to the Fleet.

It would seem that nobody of any importance in the seventeenth century could feel certain of going through life without being introduced at some time or other to the Fleet. Yet it was no place for a delicately nurtured lady sixty years of age whose health was not very strong, and who suffered from the gout. It was, in fact, enough to undermine Lady Hatton's health for the rest of her life. And maybe it did so, for she does not appear to have been at all robust after she came out of it.

The comforts to which she was accustomed may not have been "modern," but they were what she was used to, and they certainly included a seat by the fire and a warm bed. The beds of the century were a feature. They were massive and large. Some of them were almost as large as rooms, and they were replete with the softest down pillows and bolsters and feather mattresses—even if they did happen to be a trifle stuffy when the curtains that enclosed them were drawn. In the Fleet there were no beds at all, only palliasses on the floor if prisoners were lucky, and practically no other furniture. Permission had to be obtained for any small luxuries for which they might choose to pay, though they could not have much, because there was neither accommodation nor convenience for them. It was a wretchedly draughty place, and even

## *Lady Hatton in the Fleet*

when prisoners were all set up with what little they could squeeze in, there was too much raw stonework about for it to look homely.

Lady Hatton did not take kindly to the Fleet. She ordered in every luxury for which there was room, but that was not enough for half the things she wanted. She was very uncomfortable indeed. She objected to the cold, the draught, the odours. By the time her food reached her from goodness knows what distant region it was no longer palatable—though conceivably her own cook saw to its preparation. She complained long and loudly. She never ceased complaining. And she set her wits to work to find a way out. When Lady Hatton got on the warpath she made so much trouble that the authorities were glad to let her return to Hatton House as soon as the formalities had been arranged.

Bishop Wren found that he had underestimated the resistance of his adversary. He looked round for a new method of approach. Before he found it he was himself in prison. By that time the Long Parliament was sitting, and it had ordered his arrest on a charge of introducing Roman Catholic practices into the Church of England services. As Lady Hatton lived next door and had every opportunity of hearing his services from the great new pew she had recently built in the chapel, it is perhaps pardonable to wonder whether she may have had something to do with his apprehension. Anyway, he was carried off to the Tower, and he came off worse than Lady Hatton had done, for he remained in prison nineteen years. He was arrested in 1641 and not released until Charles II came to the throne in 1660.

The Parliament took possession of Ely House, which was all to the good, in the opinion of Lady Hatton. And if tenacity of purpose is any criterion of worth, she certainly deserved her triumph.

## *The Lady of Bleeding Heart Yard*

In January, 1641, she heard that Sir John Banks, the new owner of Corfe Castle, had become Lord Chief Justice of the Common Pleas, and soon after that he was sworn a member of the Privy Council.

Lady Hatton had been turning her attention to politics. When the Long Parliament began to sit—after eleven years had gone by without one—she found a new use for her unusual intelligence and tempestuous energies. She became a Roundhead. It was tiresome that some of her best friends and relations should remain Royalists, but she did what she could by argument and expostulation to make them see the folly of their ways. She instilled her principles into her grandson, and though there are indications that Frances remained a Royalist—perhaps because Sir Robert Howard was one—Robert and his grandmother were in complete accord.

Lady Hatton was at Stoke Poges when the Civil War began. Stoke Park was a rendezvous of the Roundheads. She herself was as ardent as any of them. The leaders of the Parliament rode to and fro through that wide park of hers, and met in those rooms that are no more. The Court beauty of the reign of James I had become the great lady of the Parliament in the reign of his son, and was now not only the centre of mere social assemblies, but of vital political reunions, in which figured such men as the Earls of Northumberland, Essex, and Warwick, the Lords Holland, Saye and Sele, and Digby, Sir Walter Erle, Sir Harry Vane, Sir John Danvers, Denzil Holles, Bulstrode Whitelock, John Hampden and Mr. Pym. She was earnest in her support of their principles. She really believed that the emancipation of a people was of more importance than the aspirations of a Stuart King. She was, in fact, ahead of her times ; and when it is remembered that she was above sixty years of age the resiliency of her

## *St. Giles at Stoke Poges*

remarkable nature will be appreciated. For at that age most people are beginning to be conservative in their opinions and are commending the superior politics of their youth.

Of all the places where she lived there is none that is really sufficiently as she knew it to be able to bring her back in imagination. It is not possible to go to Corfe Castle, to Hatton House, or to Stoke Park, and walk through rooms that remain as she would remember them. It is not even possible to picture her in the Church of St. Andrew's at Holborn, although she was buried there, because it is not the same church as the one in which she was laid. In the days of Sir Christopher Wren that church was old and ruinous, so most of it was pulled down, and he designed the one which stands on the site of it and bears its name.

There is nevertheless a place which has changed only a little since Lady Hatton knew it, and where it is possible to recall her in surroundings that she knew. This is the Church of St. Giles at Stoke Poges—a very ancient structure, for most of it was built six centuries ago. The south porch is fashioned of oak that has weathered those centuries. A yew tree grows by the entrance and is said to be as old as the porch. Perhaps it is not really as ancient as that, but it may well be much older than Lady Hatton. If trees could speak and had memories it could describe her to the curious ; and quite likely it is the only living thing that could do that now.

Inside the church there are objects on which her eyes once rested. The tomb in the wall of the chancel—the brasses to Sir William de Moleyns, who died in 1425, and to his granddaughter Alianore. The de Moleyns' owned Stoke Park when it was an embattled manor, with stout stone walls and towers and ramparts, centuries before Lady Hatton had it. Sir William de Moleyns and his granddaughter and their brasses were of interest to her if only because of that. When she lived the

## *The Lady of Bleeding Heart Yard*

Hastings chapel was less than a hundred years old, and the almshouses, for which she founded a charity which still goes on, stood beside it. Mr. Penn removed them farther afield about 1765.

Her time at Stoke Poges was drawing to a close. Her work for the Parliament had displeased the King. Prince Rupert, the son of her friend Elizabeth, Queen of Bohemia, was sent to punish her for her vexatious courses. Had it been a few years earlier she might have fortified the place as well as she could, and stayed to fight him. But she was too elderly and too unwell. She gave orders to her servants to leave everything as it was, and she wrote Prince Rupert a letter—perhaps it was the last she ever wrote in that house—and then she went away :

I am heartily sorry to fly from this dwelling when I hear your Excellency is coming so near it, which however with all in and about it is most willingly exposed to your Pleasure and Accommodation. . . .

The Parliament is the only firm Foundation of the greatest Establishment the King or his Posterity can wish and attain, and therefore if you should persist in the unhappinesse to support any Advice to break the Parliament upon any Pretence whatsoever, you shall concur to destroy the best Groundwork for His Majesty's Prosperity.

And with that she returned to Hatton House in Holborn.

Prince Rupert did not take her advice. He was the life and soul of the Cavaliers, and his brother Prince Maurice ran him a good second ; but their eldest surviving brother, Charles, Prince Elect and Count Palatine of the Rhine, took the side of the Parliament, and Lady Hatton showed her appreciation of his political opinions by leaving him a legacy of £500 a year in her will.

## *The Court at Oxford*

It was not long before the Civil War was chasing the King from pillar to post. He left Whitehall early in 1642. The battle of Edgehill was fought in the following October, and after it the Court went into residence at Oxford. About this time the poet Milton wrote his sonnet "When the Assault was Intended to the City," in commemoration of the royal advance on Turnham Green—which was the nearest the Cavaliers got to London. From all over the country as time went on came stories of sieges and surrenders—of fortresses being given up to the Parliament and of strongholds being held for the King. Oxford was, perhaps, the only city which remained entirely loyal to His Majesty's cause. For a while it had the brilliancy of Whitehall and Hampton Court, and was full to overflowing. There was not a room to be had—or even so much as a bed. Learning was suspended. The halls and colleges were mere billets for the lords and gentry who were distributed from cellar to roof in all of them.

The Queen was constantly in motion. At one time with the King in Oxford, at another gone to Holland with the Crown jewels and regalia. Then at York, and marching south with an army. Back again at Oxford in 1643, and in the following year down at Exeter, where she gave birth to her youngest child, the Princess Henrietta Anne, before she fled to France, not to return until all hostility was at an end. The King arrived in Exeter soon after his consort had quitted it, and saw for the first time the infant she had left behind.

Sir Robert Howard sat in the Long Parliament until he was disabled because of his Royalist leanings. He then busied himself with his garrisons at Aston-on-Clun and at Hopesay House. At one time he was in Oxford.

In 1644 the Parliament seized the goods of Frances, Lady

## *The Lady of Bleeding Heart Yard*

Purbeck. There is an order for their disposal dated October 29th in that year :

29th October 1644

*At the Committee of the House of Comons for Execucons*

It is this day ordered that the goods of the Lady Viscountess Purbecke seized by warrant of this Committee bee foorthē'th sent to the Committee of Sequestrations sitting at Camden House London. And that the s'd goods bee swoenlarged valued and sould according to the valuation to Col: Iohn Berrowe, and the proved hereof paid to the Lo: Grey in pursuance of an Order of the House of Comons dated 4 f . . y last past. The goods being first discovered for this p'pose by the s'd Col: Berrowe

[signed] MILES CORBETT.

Colonel John Berrowe did not get much in return for the pains he had taken to seize the chattels of the Lady Viscountess Purbeck. His solicitor's acknowledgment of the receipt of the goods is with the Order from the Committee :

I Huthur Jones Sollicitor to Col: Berrowe acknowledge ye receipt of ye Lady viscountesse Purbecks goods from Cambden House to ye value of 42 is

8 Dec: 1644

By me *H. Jones.*

In 1645 Frances was in Oxford, and there is reason to believe she was with Sir Robert Howard. In spite of Cardinal Richelieu, Sir Kenelm Digby, and her change of religion—in spite of whatever excuse she may have used to obtain permission to return to England from exile, she and Sir Robert Howard had been together ever since.

## XX

### LADY HATTON

AMONG THE SIEGES THAT WERE BEING HELD ALL OVER ENGLAND there was none more famous than that of Corfe Castle. Had the great stronghold belonged still to Lady Hatton its ultimate history would have been very different from what it was, and it might even now represent one of our national monuments of mediæval splendour, for she would have held it for the Parliament. But Sir John Banks and his lady were Royalists, and while Sir John was following the King all over the country Lady Banks and her children were resisting the Roundheads at Corfe.

For weeks the Castle was besieged, and every weapon known in seventeenth-century warfare brought to bear on those stout walls which had withstood the battery of man-made arms and time. And then the Roundheads established a blockading party at the foot of the Castle hill and directed operations from it as a base. Lady Banks, as intrepid a châtelaine for the King as Lady Hatton would have been for the Parliament, had petitioned Prince Maurice to garrison her home with officers and men before the blockading party arrived, and with great forethought had filled her cellars and her strong-rooms with food and firing and everything else she could think of to withstand a siege. Large supplies of powder and match were stored away, and all got ready for emergency.

The blockading party kept the Castle garrison pinioned behind the Castle walls, and tried to starve the inmates into surrender. Lady Banks neither starved nor surrendered.



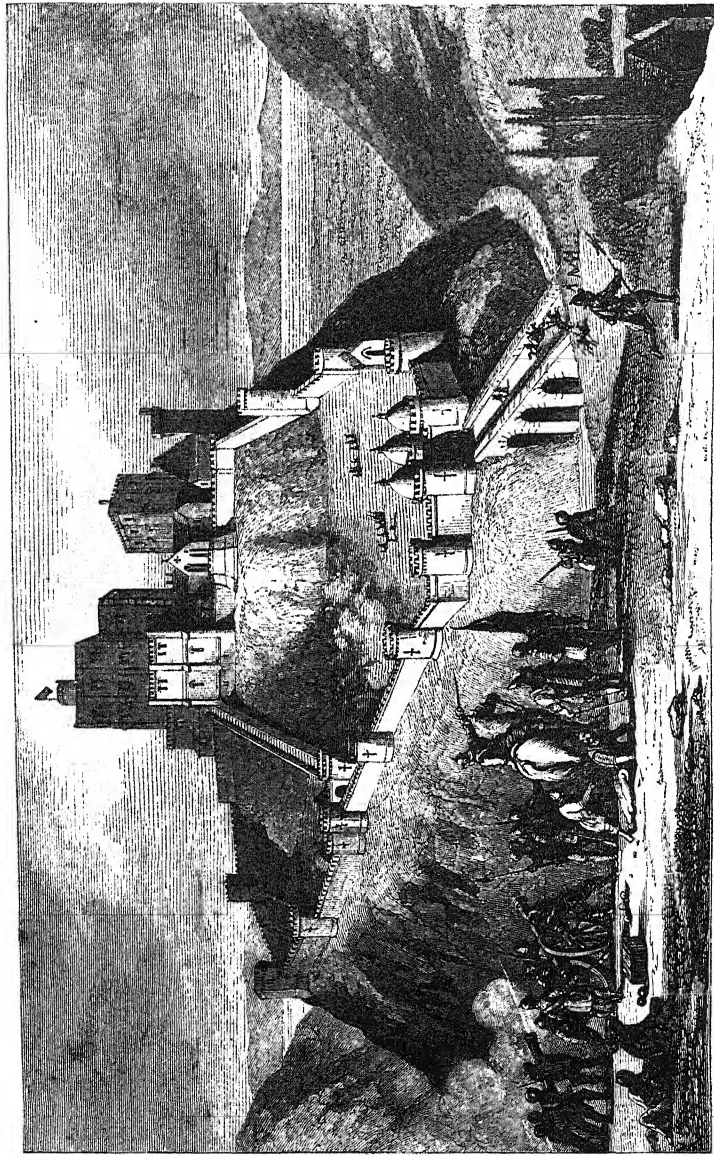
## *The Lady of Bleeding Heart Yard*

Then an escalading party was sent in charge of Sir Walter Erle to storm the Castle and scale the walls. Lady Banks in person, with her children, her maidservants, and the five serving men she had with her, held the upper wards while the garrison held the lower, and an unfailing fire of red-hot embers coupled with stones were thrown over the walls to keep back the escaladers. The assault failed, and the Parliament men, alarmed at the sudden surrender of Bristol to Prince Rupert, and hearing rumours that Prince Maurice was hot on their heels, deserted the siege and made for safe harbourage at Poole.

The surrender of Bristol was only a temporary measure, and Prince Maurice was not at Corfe, so it was not long before the attack on the Castle was renewed. The blockading party took up a stand that looked as though it might go on for ever. Lady Banks would neither treat with them nor give in. Supplies in the Castle dwindled, and rules and regulations became irksome, but the courageous lady would never admit defeat. In the end it was by treachery on the part of one of the garrison officers—a Lieutenant-Colonel Pitman—that Corfe Castle was brought to surrender. And then Lady Banks had to leave it for ever.

The Parliament men followed up the capture by a demand on the county rate in an effort to annihilate the fortress, but were never able to do more than reduce it to a ruin—that ruin which still remains as a monument of their devastating influence.

Lady Hatton followed with interest the siege of the Castle that had once been her own, but she deplored the politics of its present owners. She never knew of its ultimate fate—that grief at least was spared her. She had other things to occupy her mind. Her world was tumbling about her ears, though she stood firm in the middle of it. And, while Lady



CORFE CASTLE IN 1643  
*By kind permission of Ralph Banks, Esq.*



## *London fortified*

Banks was approaching the day when Corfe Castle would be hers no longer, Lady Hatton was living—for perhaps the first time in her life—in undisturbed possession of Hatton House in Holborn. The Parliament had voted it her own.

As for Stoke Park, it was at one time in the hands of Prince Rupert for the King, and at another in the hands of Cromwell for the Parliament. There came a day when the King was brought there a prisoner—but that was later.

In 1642 Ware Park, the home of Sir Thomas Fanshawe—a relation of the deceased Alice, Lady Hatton—was searched by the rebels, and found to contain ordnance ; and when to this enormity Sir Thomas added that of fighting for the King at Edgehill, his estate was sequestered and his goods “ sold by the candle.” Lady Hatton thought this an excellent opportunity to acquire such a desirable property, and she became the purchaser. Sir Thomas Fanshawe and Sir Christopher Hatton—son of Alice, and created in 1643 Lord Hatton—joined the King at Oxford, and together with other Royalists raised a sum of between twenty and thirty thousand pounds for His Majesty’s necessities. Lady Hatton made this good to Lord Hatton eventually in her will. Ware Park she left to Lord Grey of Groby and not back to the Fanshawes.

She was now living in a city strongly fortified. London was the headquarters of the Parliament and was encircled by a vast line of forts and trenches within a radius of twelve miles, from Vauxhall to Redriff on the south side of the river, and from Tothill to Wapping on the north. To obtain the completion of the work, and as speed was an object, men, women, and children assisted in digging the trenches, and spent their Sundays so employed, in spite of the veneration in which the Puritans viewed the sanctity of the Sabbath Day. In order to enlist the services of the citizens preachers were asked to “ stir up ” their parishioners to the work, and there

## *The Lady of Bleeding Heart Yard*

were recruiting processions all over the town, with flags flying, drums beating, and swords rattling to attract attention. It was said at one time that "more than 20,000 persons were working without pay," and at another that hedges, trees, and houses in the line of fortification were being pulled down to make way for the labour of the citizens. The people went in bands according to their trades; on one day "the Vintners with their wives and families, their servants, and their wine porters"—on another the mercers and allied trades—on yet another the shoemakers with their apprentices—the cordwainers—the merchants—and the watermen. The fish-wives and the oyster-women took their turns. Fifty trades and more are mentioned as sharing the work between them, to say nothing of the "Trained Bandes, who laide downe their armes and went out to digge with spades, shovells, pickaxes, and such like tools on their shoulders."

The King was trying to starve the city, and by punishing the country people who supplied provisions hoped to bring it to a state of siege; but in this he failed completely. The Parliament had command of the ships. "They lay two and two and side by side at their guard and well provided" all the way up the river. The Parliament also commanded other resources of the country, and was more likely to starve the King at Oxford than for London to be so treated by the King. Nevertheless, there were serious disadvantages to such a state of Civil War. The fortifications when built had to be armed and manned. There was an unending coming and going of guards and patrols. Above all, everybody had to be fed and clothed and paid; but the Parliament men were never in the terrible state to which before long the King and his faithful Cavaliers were pitifully reduced.

Lady Hatton suffered no serious inconvenience from the Parliament, and as she lived in London she underwent no

## *Roundheads at Ely House*

hardships of raid, or siege, or confiscation at Hatton House. Not far away, by Black Mary's Hole, was the nearest fort, and there were trenches on either side of it connecting it with the forts on right and left. Lady Hatton was safe.

Of course there were rumours which might have disturbed a less intrepid lady : that the King was bearing down on the town—that he was going to attack the City—that Prince Rupert and his cavalry were on their way to Holborn. There was some truth in the rumours at one time, for after the surrender of Bristol to Prince Rupert, Queen Henriette Marie strongly advocated that the King's forces should march on London. Had the King chosen this course instead of marching on Gloucester, there is no knowing what might have happened ; but he did not take his Queen's advice, and London had time to make ready while the Earl of Essex hastened to relieve Gloucester ; and after that it was too late for anything the King might do to be effective against London. Rumours, nevertheless, were running about like wildfire. Some vivid imaginations even saw the advancing army on the horizon. It all came to nothing.

Lady Hatton had her little discomforts of a sort. At one time the Parliament converted Ely House into a gaol, and there was a constant coming and going of prisoners. This made much noise and no little disturbance which was clearly audible at Hatton House. Later the prisoners were sent elsewhere, and Ely House was transformed into a hospital for wounded Roundhead soldiers. This made just as much noise, but had to be taken as part of the misfortunes of war ; and Lady Hatton and her people could devote their energies to relieving the distress of the wounded.

As time went on she heard all kinds of strange news. The strangest, perhaps, was when the King held a Parliament at Oxford for the purpose of raising supplies for the royal cause,

## *The Lady of Bleeding Heart Yard*

while the real Parliament in London was in possession of most of the sources of the country's wealth. She heard of the different battles, the losses and gains on either side, the exaggerated numbers that were reported wounded, killed, and taken prisoners. She heard of the wholesale sequestration by the Parliament of the estates, real and personal, of the archbishops and bishops, and of all other clerics and persons who had raised arms against the Parliament, or who had rendered aid and contributions to further the cause of the King. She knew that two of the royal children were still in London—the Princess Elizabeth, aged eight, and her brother Henry, aged four. In July, 1644, they were taken to the house in Chelsea of a relation of Lady Hatton's, Sir John Danvers, for change of air. Sir John Danvers was one of the executors of her will. His daughter Elizabeth was a goddaughter of Lady Hatton's, and some years later married Robert, the son of the Viscountess Purbeck.

Want and privation had begun to creep in on every side. Attempts were made to treat for a peace, but in vain. Then came the Self-Denying Ordinance, followed later by a reconstruction of the Parliamentary army. Lady Hatton heard of the prophecies of one William Lilly, who had risen above the astrological horizon in place of the defunct Dr. Lambe. He was consulted by both King and Roundheads, and what is the more wonderful, followed by either side, but he was always careful to be somewhat vague in his fortune-telling, except when the issue in question was only too apparent. He managed to keep on good terms with both parties, which, after all, from his point of view, was the main thing. In his history of his own times he makes a great matter of having obtained for King Charles, when the latter was confined to Carisbrooke Castle, a file and a bottle of aqua-fortis to help him to escape. To the Roundheads he prophesied the

## *Frances ill at Oxford*

success of the battle of Naseby, telling Sir Bulstrode Whitelocke that "if they did not engage before the 11th of the month [June, 1645] the Parliament would have the greatest victory that they had ever had as yet." As Mr. William Lilly knew that it was not convenient for either side to engage before the 11th, and that the indications were all in favour of the Parliamentary victory whenever they could engage, he was fairly safe.

But before the battle of Naseby had taken place Lady Hatton heard news which, to her, was of more serious interest than anything connected with the King or the Parliament. Frances was ill at Oxford.

The Royalists at Oxford were in sore straits. They had spent on the King every penny they could raise. Many of them were absolutely homeless. Their estates and goods had been sequestered by the Parliament. When that curious "mongrel" Parliament, as King Charles ungratefully called it, had been held at Oxford for supplies, they had generously led the way with whatever they had—money, plate, horses, and goods of every description. They were now so poor that they scarcely knew where to turn to pay for their necessities. Oxford, the city which only a few years before had so loyally welcomed the King and his brilliant Court, had become a place of sickness and privation. Every day brought news of fresh calamities. Nothing was talked of but winning and losing towns and castles and men, of lack of money, and of how each one was to live from day to day. Countesses were lodged in small rooms with hardly a maidservant to attend them, and delicate gentlewomen in tradesmen's houses in poor streets "to lie in a very bad bed in a garret; to one dish of meat and that not the best ordered; no money for we were as poor as Job; nor clothes more than a man or two brought in their cloak bags."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Memoirs of Anne, Lady Fanshawe*, 1600-72.



## *The Lady of Bleeding Heart Yard*

In 1644 there was an epidemic of war fever, caused by the overcrowding of the city, the insanitary conditions, and the large numbers of soldiers who were billeted in close quarters. This outbreak was followed in 1645 by an epidemic of the plague. The plague in that year was fairly widespread in England, and together with the outbreaks of fever must have accounted for almost as many deaths as the war. To add to these horrors Oxford was in a state of siege. General Fairfax lay outside the walls with his men, his tents, and his ordnance.

In the midst of the want and the woe of Oxford Frances fell sick of her last illness. It is said that Lady Hatton was with her when she died. But there is no mention of what her sickness was, or even of why she was in Oxford at all. There is no mention of when Lady Hatton came or when she went, or of how she got leave to enter an enemy city in time of siege. If this could be done there was no better person to do it, and it is not difficult to imagine the elaborate formalities which then were necessary, and the vigour with which she attended to them—the descent on the various officials whose permission had to be obtained—the persuasion and expostulation—the permits to be collected, signed, countersigned, and produced. Then the long, dangerous drive over bad roads with risks to be run at every corner, and the arrival at last of the harassed lady among the Parliamentary men posted outside the walls. The date of her arrival is uncertain. It was probably before May 31st, 1645, on which date King Charles I stormed Leicester, and so drew General Fairfax and his men away for the time being from Oxford.

Frances was buried in St. Mary's Church on June 4th, 1645, ten days before the battle of Naseby shattered the hopes of the Royalists for ever. There is no monument to her in St. Mary's Church. The Parliament men did not believe in erecting monuments to the memory of the dead. They

## *Burial of Frances*

believed in destroying the monuments already erected. Besides, it was no time to think of such things at that date in Oxford, and if they were thought of there was no one to carry them out. But her name was inscribed on a stone on the floor of the chancel—it was still lying there when Anthony Wood made a note of it—and the record of her burial remains among the entries on the register of St. Mary's parish.

It was a very sad Lady Hatton who returned to Hatton House in Holborn after Frances died. She had braved the storms of a tempestuous life—had ridden triumphant upon its tide of trouble—but when she lost Frances she lost the impetus that had carried her forward, and all that she had suffered seemed somehow in vain. Nevertheless, she could not submit to difficulties. She endeavoured to find some principle behind it all—some purpose only to be served by adversity. There is her own assurance that she ultimately found it in religion, and so came to believe that lack of spiritual consideration had been at the root of her burden—had eclipsed the comfort of life and laid her open to sorrow. She resolved to pass what time she had left in contemplation of spiritual possibilities, and in preparation for a future life in which all promises would be redeemed.

Autumn gave place to winter and the Civil War still went on. It was passing Lady Hatton by. Sometimes she lay in her great bedchamber, while the flames danced on her hearth and reflected themselves in the big mirror which she had planned to leave to her niece Diana when she died. She watched from her windows the pigeons flocking in the courtyard and the leaves falling in her privy garden—Hatton Wall still marks the end of it. She watched till all the trees were bare except the evergreens, and the long symmetrical rows of box and yew and cypress so neatly planted and pruned.

## *The Lady of Bleeding Heart Yard*

At times she was oppressed by memories. They tightened her heart and set her temples throbbing. Hatton House was full of memories. The happiest, of course, was when she came there first as the bride of Sir William Hatton half a century ago. It had been delightful to be the mistress of such a home when she was scarcely out of the schoolroom, and when life lay before her in one glorious, golden vista. She was at the end of the vista now, and it had proved neither glorious nor golden. The births of Elizabeth and Frances had been her next happiness. But the death of Frances was too recent. The tempests of that sorrowful life—so full of promise when it opened—swept over her in cruel gusts of memory. She could not bear the past. She turned to her religion, welcomed the visits of her relations and of her friends, planned her will, and sent for her solicitor.

He was one John Godbold, a Serjeant at Law. He came and wrote at her dictation. The will took some time to think out because she had a lot to leave, and she wanted to leave it in her own characteristic way. A good many people owed her money. Some of them are men famous in history—for fame in history does not stay the hand in borrowing—and she planned to leave their debts to their wives when they were married and to themselves when they were not. In this way she accounted for several thousand pounds. She gave legacies to numbers of her relations, her friends, and her servants—from Thomas Pinson, her park-keeper, to William, the "fitting boy." Her trustees and executors were chosen for their worth and ability—Dudley, Lord North, Sir John Danvers, her cousin, Sir Christopher Wray, and Denzil Holles.

Her will is at the British Museum (Harl. MS. 7193, ff. 16–21) where it may be seen. It is not given here in full because the legal phraseology—which does not differ from that still used in wills at the present time—is redundant, and

## *Will of Lady Hatton*

contains inventories of her property which might be tedious to read, as they are much the same as other inventories of property. Some parts of the will, however, are characteristic. She began it thus :

“ This is the last will and testament of mee Elizabeth Hatton one of the daughters of Thomas late Earle of Exet'r sonne and heyre of Will'm Lord Burleigh [note how she spells Burghley] late High Treasurer of England made the Laste day of December in the yere of o'r Lord God 1645 And in the one and twentieth yere of the Raigne of o'r gracious sovraine Lord King Charles.

“ Havinge seriously considered howe I have abounded with temporal felicity while I was the happy wife of S'r Will'm Hatton my first most faithfull and deare deceased husband cozen and heyre of S'r Chr'er Hatton late Lord Chancell'r of England with whose breath all my transitory happines expired And then for want of spiritual consideration (the stormes of a tempestious life overtaking me) had for many yeres soe farre eclipsed the comfort of this life That my very being was a burthen to me untill the infinite mercyes of the auth'r of all comforts raying my thoughts to an higher contemplation And opened myne understanding to discern That hee whoe had suffered for my sinnes And payd the inestimable price of my redemption (even out of faythfulnes to my soul) had suffered me to be afflicted That I might fly into his armes for refuge wch were spreadout upon the Crosse for my redemption whoe having settled & reposed myselfe on his gracious p'imses by fayth in him alone My candle here neere wasted my eternall ioy approaches I doe with all humble thankfulness wch my heart or tongue are able to expresse not onely acknowledge But with unspeakable comfort renderup my soule as a free will offering To that

## *The Lady of Bleeding Heart Yard*

glorious and incomprehensible Trinity the father sonne & holy ghost To whome be all glory & prayse to all eternity As for my body I desire it may be buried in the p<sup>r</sup>ish Church of St Andrewe in Holborne where my will is a decent monum<sup>t</sup> be made according to the discretion of my Execut<sup>r</sup>s And it is my desire that my funerall be without pompe and that the charge thereof doe not exceed five hundred pounds whereof the sume of fifty pounds I will shalbe given to the poore people of the p<sup>r</sup>ish when my corps shalbe carried to be buried And I doe devise and bequeath the sume of five hundred pounds more to be payd and imployed as a stock for the better mayntenance & reliefe of the poore people of the said p<sup>r</sup>ish and to be soe ordered and disposed of as my Execut<sup>r</sup>s shal thinke meet

“AND as touching the residue of my estate Being desirous to settle the same as is most agreeable to my intent & settled resolution on that behalfe

“FIRST I devise and bequeath to the gracious and religious Prince Charles Prince Elect and Count Palatine of the Rhyne all my Lease estate interest & terme of yeres wch I had & purchased in the names of the late right hon<sup>ble</sup> Will<sup>m</sup> late E: of Exet<sup>r</sup> & others in trust for me of S<sup>r</sup> Henry Ware Bnt & others for security of £500 a yere etc :”

She left everything in and about Hatton House to go on for ever as it was in her own time, and rents and money for its upkeep. She willed that it should never change its name, but that to whomsoever it might come, it should be for ever called Hatton House for a memorial of the true respect and honour which she bore to the noble family of the Hattons. It was to be the inheritance, in the hands of trustees, of her grandson, Robert Villiers, until the death of his father, the Viscount Purbeck, and then under certain conditions which appear in

## *Lady Hatton's charities*

the will itself, of her grandnephew, the Earl of Exeter, or to Christopher Lord Hatton, whom she had forgiven for being a Royalist.

She left charities to the poor of Holborn and of Stoke Poges ; £500 to be used as a stock for the maintenance and relief of the poor people in the parish of St. Andrew's in Holborn, and to the almshouses—she calls them the hospital at Stoke—£100 to be laid out in lands of inheritance for the benefit of the aged inmates. She left another £100 to be laid out in lands of inheritance in or near Stoke Poges for the relief of the poor of the parish other than the inmates of the almshouses. But they must be only people of good character ; and if at any time there were no such, then from the rent of the lands thus purchased was to be paid the sum of £5 each, from time to time to such maidservants as should have served for the space of seven years together in any one service within the said parish of Stoke Poges towards their marriage portions on their wedding-days. Her charities at Holborn and at Stoke Poges still go on, but it is to be feared that she is not remembered in either parish with that degree of appreciation which her kindness warrants ; and at Stoke Poges her bequest seems now to take the form of clothing. Perhaps maidservants who have served for the space of seven years in any one service and afterwards marry are all too rare.

She bequeathed her manor of Fakenham to her grandchild, Robert Villiers, together with various holdings at Stoke Poges and Farnham Royal. The manor of Stoke Park reverted to him in any case as heir to his mother at the death of the Viscount Purbeck. She left him “ all her plate, householdstuffs, utensils, goods & chattells at her house at Stoake in the County of Bucks or appoynted or used to that house not otherwise disposed of by this her last will And her Ora'ge tawny Sparva of velvet & Damaske with all the necessaryes

## *The Lady of Bleeding Heart Yard*

belonging thereto & therewith used And her twoe best Chests of Lynnen the one of Beddlynnen the other of fyne Damaske soe as her said grandchild shall enter good security (such as her said Execut'rs shall allowe of) That the same shalbe p'served to be used at her said house of Stoake when he shall have the possession thereof."

She ended her will as follows :

"AND of this my last will & testam't I doe make & appoynt my said worthy freinds Denzill Hollis S'r Iohn Danvers & S'r Chr'er Wray my Execut'rs and doe desire their great care in the execution thereof And as a testimony of my true & faythful respects to every of them I doe give to every of them five hundred pounds a peece

"ALL the residue of my Leases goods chattells reall & personall estate herein & hereby not form'ly given & bequeathed my debts payd & funerall expences discharged I doe devise and bequeath the same to my said grandchild Robert Villiers his heyres Execut'rs & Adm'strat'rs according to their sev'all natures & quallityes thereof

"AND if any doubt Question or ambiguity shall arise in this my last will & testam't it is my will & meaning & doe hereby declare that the same shalbe ended & determined by the said Sergiant Godbold whoe knoweth my will intent & purpose in all things concerning this my will and what he shall declare as touching any such doubt or question I shall and will allowe thereof and doe desire all whome it shall or may concerne to rest therewith satisfied

"AND in witnes that this is my last will & testam't I doe hereby revoke all former willes And to this my p'sent will conteyning eight sheets of paper all written by the hand writing of the said Sergiant Godbold (yet for hast) somewhat with a different hand p'te being written before I have sealed

## *The lying in state*

the same with my seale on the toppe of the first sheet and on this last sheet & thereto subscribed my name the day and yere first within written and then published the same

“ In the p'sence of

WILLIAM SPENCER

HUMFRY MADGE

FRANCIS WHITE ”

The will was begun on December 31st, 1645. There is a hint that she had left it rather late, for Serjeant Godbold had to write it out in different hands for haste. “ My candle here neere wasted,” she had said, and so it was. The will was its last flicker. Three days later it burnt itself out. On January 3rd, 1646, the vivid, forceful lady was no more.

She lay in state at Hatton House for nearly six weeks longer. All through the dreary January days and well on into February people came to see her lying there. A magnificent black pall embroidered with her arms covered her bier and fell in folds upon the floor. Black hangings lined the walls. Candles burned. She was old—sixty-seven—and her hair was like threads of silver, her skin like wax, but the forcefulness had not faded from her face. Against the background of sable and shadows the candles, flickering, created the illusion that she moved.

On February 11th they buried her in St. Andrew's Church, as she had wished, and £50 was distributed among the poor of the parish according to her will. But, though the dates of her death and burial are on the parish register, there seems to be no monument to her memory in the church, though she left instructions concerning one. Her will is interesting in that it was written during the Civil War with no fear on her part that the disposition of her property would



## *The Lady of Bleeding Heart Yard*

not be carried out as safely and effectually as if the nation had been at peace.

It was a long time before her memory faded. It clung to Hatton House till Hatton House was no more. Thus do we leave our ghosts behind us—in the personalities we have created and in the work we leave unfinished for posterity to continue after we are dead.

Stories about her pride and her parties, her lawsuits, her consultations with fortune-tellers, her never-ending quarrels, were told for many years. She had lived so long at Hatton House that she had become a tradition. When the Restoration brought Charles II to the throne it was not forgotten that she had turned from his father, that she had defied the Bishops of Ely, that she had been a rebel. These things were told, and they changed in the telling, till Hatton House and its owner were alike forgotten, and all that remained of them at last was the strange legend of the Lady of Bleeding Heart Yard.

THE END

## ENVOY

THE VISCOUNT PURBECK MARRIED AGAIN AFTER FRANCES Viscountess Purbeck died. His second wife was Elizabeth, daughter of Sir William Slingsby of Kippax—a lady whose anxiety to become a Viscountess enabled her to accept the husband who necessarily accompanied that honour. They soon quarrelled with Robert—the son of Frances—and, according to Sir Harris Nicolas, a very learned barrister-at-law, the Viscount Purbeck as readily repudiated the young man after Frances died as other authorities allege he acknowledged him before. The Viscount Purbeck even went so far as to give it as his opinion that Robert was not only not his son but not the son of Frances either—though he was quite at a loss to say who his parents really were. The fact is the Viscount Purbeck, if taken the right way and when “his dull fit was on him,” might be persuaded to say almost anything.

He died on February 18th, 1657, having had no children by Elizabeth Slingsby, and was buried at Charlton.

Sir Robert Howard remained faithful to the memory of Frances until he was fifty-eight years of age, and then he became the husband of the Lady Catherine Neville, eldest daughter of Lord Abergavenny—they called him Bergavenny in those days—whom he married in 1648. There is mention of them in Shropshire in the following year, when “the sum of 40/ was ordered to be laid out for the entertainment of Sir Robert Howard, knight, lord of the manor, and his lady.” Presumably Clun Manor.

## *The Lady of Bleeding Heart Yard*

They had three sons, Henry, Edward, and Robert. These boys were little more than infants when Sir Robert Howard died on April 22nd, 1653. He is buried at Clun, where a monument in the church marks his last resting-place.

After the death of Lady Hatton the next owner of Hatton House in Holborn was Robert Villiers, her grandson, and then Christopher Lord Hatton. It will be seen from the will of Lady Hatton that she left the property in the hands of trustees—Dudley, Lord North, Sir Christopher Wray, and Mr. Denzil Holles. They were to administer the estate for the benefit of Robert Villiers, until the death of the Viscount Purbeck released to Robert Villiers the property of Stoke Park. Hatton House was then to be administered by the trustees for the benefit of John, Earl of Exeter, Lady Hatton's grand-nephew, should he marry the Lady Diana, eldest daughter of Algernon, Earl of Northumberland, an union Lady Hatton heartily desired, but if the marriage did not take place then the next heir was to be Christopher Lord Hatton. There were also other conditions and reservations, but they did not take effect because John, Earl of Exeter, did not marry the Lady Diana, eldest daughter of Algernon, Earl of Northumberland, so Christopher Lord Hatton inherited in due course.

This Christopher was the grandson of Alice, Lady Hatton, and of that other Sir Christopher Hatton who was godson and namesake of Queen Elizabeth's Lord Chancellor. He was the last owner of Hatton House, and it may be of interest to insert a couple of letters written by his grandfather and grandmother who were contemporaries of the Lady of Bleeding Heart Yard. One is the letter from Sir Christopher Hatton to Alice Fanshawe containing his proposal of marriage, and the other is a letter from Alice Fanshawe herself, after she became Lady Hatton, addressed to her son, the father of the

## *An Elizabethan love letter*

last owner of Hatton House. These letters<sup>1</sup> will vindicate the lady to whom Mr. Barham has given such a troubled career in his legend called *The Housewarming*. Alice Fanshawe's son was round about fifteen years old, and a student at Jesus College, Cambridge.

*Sir Christopher Hatton to Mistress Alice Fanshawe*

(Circa 1601)

Sweete Mistress Ales,

As I never liked ye amorous gallants of our tyme yt make a traffique of lovinge and a trade of dissemblinge lovinge whome ere they see and onelie lovinge whilst they see ; soe am I not composed of soe hard a mettle but yt fine beautie can pearce and compleate perfections ravish my admirynge soule. Hithertoe have I beene good tutor toe my oune youthfull fancies makinge keepe whom in a plain whomly breste ; but since of late yr beautie procured them a litle libertie they are flowne abroad and have burnte theire winges in affecons flame soe yt I feare they will never flye whome againe. I have ofte observed yt to bee ye effect of base and a dull discernynge eie toe dote uppon every object withoutt distinction and have markt yt outt as trew propertie of ye fierie soule toe honour chaste beautie where ever yt habours and toe love ye verie windowes of yt house where soe faire a guest as vertue sojourneth. In which sole regarde my iudgement and affeccion of olde enemyes provinge trew frendes are resolved for ever toe dwell together my affeccion commendinge my iudgement for soe faire a choice my iudgement applaundinge my affeccion for her eager persute of soe woorthy a game. Both which ioynntlie dedicate untoe yow uppon theis paper altar love unsweareable toe yr oune vertuous desertes and farr more then these fewe lines the stammering servantes of a speackinge mynde can utter.

Onelie thus yr vertue made mee to wounder ; from admiration sprunge my love ; from unspotted love theis letter the attunnie of cause which must often plead for mee in the courte of beautie since ye dissadvantage of ye tymes my manie ielialous observers prevent my presence. Maye yt therefore please yow toe answeare

<sup>1</sup> From "*Correspondence of the Hatton Family*," *Camden Society*, 1878.

## *The Lady of Bleeding Heart Yard*

my love with likeynge and my letters hereafter with a line or twoe ; yt both of us si our tongues devided with modestie and reverence could hardlie utter.

Meane tyme receave from him yt loves yow woorthylie his harte (by cause hee hath nothings deerer then his harte) vowed to bee an aeternall bedd for yr love toe rest on. Receave the wish of yr full content from him who must live discontented tyll expyrynge and extracted favour sett a period toe his chast longinge desires.

Yrs in alle harty affecons

CHR. HATTON.

Thus have I rudelie rigde theis paper Saile Soone maye hee waufted bee with happie Gaile ; Nor needs yt Piratts feare for tho' yt die Loves endles trafique yn theis Breaste doth lie.

*Lady Hatton (nee Fanshawe) to her son Christopher*

(circa 1620)

Sonne,

I have receaved both yr letters and am glad to see yor hand mende. I have not heard from yr tutor scince I saw you wch maketh me thinke his desire is to leave you behind him. He did likewise tell me soe when he was heere and gave me resons wch seemed to me verie good as his speedie returne yr loss of time my house groeth mow unholsom and yr iorneyes are verie chargable.

These considerations hath made me soe resoulfe of meeting you at Ware Park as soun as my busines will give me leave. I am now going to Jankins for a weeke ; at my returne I will make you a sommer sute. I have written more of this matter then needeth for I make noe doubt but you knowe yr duetie to me soe well that my will had been a sufficient reson to you for yr not cominge at this time. You must knowe frome me that if I did not strive some times agaynst the fond affecons of a mother I should send oftner for you then you whould be willing to come if you love your oune good as I hope you doe. I am now in hast and yeat I must put you in minde of yr cheefe duetie wch is to God wch I charge you not to neglect but to dedicate yr first thoughts to Him constantly ; read His Worde reverently ; heare sermons ; strive to take notes that you maye meditate on them withoutt wch you can

## *A storm and an explosion*

never practise wch is the onelie end for wch you were created to knowe God's Will and to indever to doe it. What panes soever you take hear in it will vannish and the proffit will remaine with you. It is contrairie in fruitles pleasures the sweetnes whereof is quicklie gon the sorrow lonely staves. Idlenes is much like or wours wch I wish you to avoyde even for yr health sake but especiallie by cause it is a simm and that not a lickle one it being the cause of manie others. Thus desiering God of His greate goddnes to bless you and alle yr studies and indevers I rest

Your verie lovinge mother

ALLES HATTON.

Alice, Lady Hatton died about 1624 when her son was nineteen years of age. He was a Cavalier, and was created Lord Hatton by King Charles I in 1643. He was Governor of Guernsey in 1662, died in 1670, and was buried in Westminster Abbey. He married in 1630, Elizabeth, daughter of Sir Charles Montague, who was the next Lady Hatton in the title to the Lady Elizabeth Hatton, *née* Cecil.

His son became the owner of Hatton House in Holborn. The son was created Viscount Hatton by King Charles II, and was Governor of Guernsey after his father. He married several times. His first wife was Cecilia, daughter of John Tufton, Earl of Thanet. This lady and her mother-in-law were the two Ladies Hatton who were killed at Castle Cornet, Guernsey, by the explosion of a powder magazine. The catastrophe happened during the night of December 29-30th, 1672, in the middle of a storm of thunder and lightning, which blew Lord Hatton out of his room on to the leads of the castle, but without doing him any hurt. The ladies were buried in Westminster Abbey.

The new owner of Hatton House did not treat Lady Elizabeth Hatton's will with the respect to which it was entitled. As soon as the property became his own he ignored

## *The Lady of Bleeding Heart Yard*

the request to keep it as it had been in the great lady's lifetime, and proceeded to pull the house down, and to break up the grounds, the privy garden, and the bowling-green. In place of them he laid out streets and houses. Nor did he wait to obtain permission to do these things, and it became necessary for him to apply for a Pardon from King Charles II.<sup>1</sup>

Lord Hatton no doubt felt satisfied, when he had received the King's Pardon, that he could now remain in quiet possession of his new streets and houses. If so, he was reckoning without the Bishop of Ely. In 1661 Matthew Wren was released from prison, and the confinement—nineteen years—had not sweetened his temper. He came out determined to secure Hatton House for his see. As there was no Hatton House but only an array of new buildings he could not conveniently enforce a claim which specified in great detail all those amenities which no longer existed. This caused complications that had not been unravelled when the Bishop died, but his successor was equally zealous, and the interminable lawsuits went on. At last, in Bishop Patrick's time, a compromise was arranged, which subjected the property to the payment of a yearly rental of £100 to the see of Ely, and cancelled all previous agreements. When the last Lord Hatton died the property reverted to the Crown.

Thus does one generation labour to build up what the next labours to pull down, and so is the balance of instability maintained between them.

<sup>1</sup> See *Appendix I*.

# APPENDICES





## APPENDIX I

### CHARLES II TO CHRISTOPHER HATTON.

(*Pat. Rolls 13 Car. II. pt. 38, No. 8.*)

5 Sept. 1661 WHEREAS we have been given to understand that our wellbeloved CHRISTOPHER HATTON, son and heir apparent of Christopher Lord Hatton of Kirby, County Northampton, heretofore was and still is lawfully seized in his demesne as of fee of and all that site and parcel of ground whereon a certain capital messuage or mansion house formerly called HATTON HOUSE in the parish of St Andrew, Holborne, in the county of Middlesex formerly stood and of and in all that parcel of ground to the said site adjoining lately called the Bowling Green ; and one other parcel of ground formerly called the Privy Garden thereunto also adjoining ; and of and in one other parcel of ground to the said parcel called the Privy Garden and Bowling Green thereunto also adjoining, heretofore a close, containing 14 acres by estimation more or less afterwards inclosed with a brick wall and lately called or known by the name of HATTON GARDEN all which parcels of ground, as the same, or any part of them do abut southward upon a certain street there commonly called HOLBORNE do contain 180 feet of assize or thereabouts and from Holborne turning towards the north and abutting eastward upon ELY HOUSE do contain 460 feet of assize or thereabouts and from thence turning towards the east and abutting south upon ELY HOUSE do contain 300 feet of assize or thereabouts

## *Appendix I*

and from thence turning again further towards the north and abutting eastward upon Saffron Hill SAFFRON HILL do contain 1022 feet of assize or thereabouts, and from thence turning towards the west and abutting northward upon a certain passage there leading to PURPOOL LANE do contain 425 feet of assize or thereabouts and from thence turning toward the south and abutting westward upon LEATHER LANE do contain 1040 feet of assize or thereabouts and from thence turning towards the east and abutting northward upon certain tenements between LEATHER LANE and the aforesaid mansion house called HATTON HOUSE do contain 210 feet of assize or thereabouts. AND that being so seized he the said CHRISTOPHER HATTON did take down and demolish the said capital messuage or mansion house and other the outhouses and buildings thereto lately belonging and did erect and build not only upon the old foundation thereof but upon divers other parts of the aforesaid site and parcels of land respectively several tenements and dwelling houses whereby he hath offended against the laws of this kingdom and incurred the penalties thereof, PARDON to the said CHRISTOPHER HATTON of all forfeitures and penalties by reason thereof and licence to continue the said buildings and to make a sewer so as the walls be built of stone or brick to fall into a certain ditch or common sewer leading from CLERKENWELL towards HOLBORNE and from thence falling into the THAMES at BRIDEWELL DOCK.

Note.—The above Deed is copied  
FROM EARLY HOLBORNE And The Legal Quarter OF  
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BY E. WILLIAMS, F.R.G.S.

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## APPENDIX II

### THE PROCEEDINGES BETWEENE THE LADY ELIZA: HATTON AND SIR EDW: COKE ATTORNEY GENER- ALL TO QUEENE ELIZA:

*September 3rd 1634*

My mariage to Sr Edw: Coke then Attourney generall was on the second of Novemb: 1599 and so hastened by him as he would by no meanes stay the drawing of any deeds, but acknowledged a statute of 40,000 $\text{£}$  for p'formance of promyses, wch passed betweene my brother Wm Cecill now Earle of Exeter, and the Lady his wife to whose remembrance I referre my case ; onely sure I am one promyse was, that whatsoever Lands he should purchase after marriage should remayne to me and my heires, upon wch promyse he had me to wife, and enioyd the whole estate of my lord Chancelour Hatton nothing conveyd from him ; not long after our marriage he began to grumble at this statute ; and continued so hott, and unkind as he took from my Bayley all the mich: rents [Michaelmas rents] dew to me before mariage, and because my bayley would not at first deliver him the moneys, he clapped him in prison, and to release him I had no way but to lett him have the money, wch I did

not long after that he turned away all my servants and because I willed them to stay but his retourne from the hall to see wheather they had comitted any misdemeanour or no, he finding them in the house made his warrant and remitted them presently to prison ; his anger encreasinge still for the statute, neere three yeares I held out wth many discourtiseys, and unquiett proceedinges, and then for quiettnes sake agaynst the Liking of my father and frends, gave it him, in wch 3 yeares I never receaved peny for my mayntenance

after this out of his bountie he sent me 100 $\text{£}$  wch I confesse I whirled amonge my servants that attended me ; But willinge I

## Appendix II

should beleve he would doe somethinge upon delivery of the statute, he made a Convayance to me of the Manner of North Elmeham in the Countie of Norfolk, amongst other things in p'te of my ioynecture, and after my decease to come to the issue male betweene us, and for default of such issue to our issue female, wch deed he desired I would not inrolle, but understandinge by some of my frends that unlesse it weare inrolled wthin 6 moneths next after it would be voyd, by their advice I caused it to be inrolled, wheareof when he had knowledge, being then the Queens Attourney generall, secretly without acquaynting me or any of my frends procured a new patent from the Crowne as upon a defective title for a fine of 20 marks in the name of two of his servants, Lockesmyth and Bullen whearby he hath defeated me and my Children of that Manner and other things worth 1000*£* per ann

Then my deare father the Earle of Exeter and my Noble unckle of Salisbury hearinge of thiese differences, called him and procured me an allowance wth oathes and protestations he would never diminish it during his life and so continued it untill the unfortunate marriage of my daughter Purbeck since that tyme I never receaved peny of S'r W'm Hattons my good husbands estate nor of S'r Edw: Coke beinge now 17 yeares since

After this hee sold away the onely daughter of my good husband S'r W'm Hatton for 4000*£* to whom though I was but a mother in law his confidence of me was such as made him in his life tyme procure her wardshipp for me nowe and upon his death bed charged me wth the care of her, and when S'r Edw: Coke came to demand her from me he most tyrannously broke open my doores and took her away ; yet afterwards he gave a note under his hand and promysed to bestow the said 4000*£* for the benefitt of me and my Children and thereupon purchasinge Minster Lovell in the Countye of Oxon, convayed it accordingly unto us and publikly before the tenants styled me there Landlady and owner of the Manner ; And for this purpose carryed me downe thither, and notwithstandinge hath since taken it from me and my Children and estated it upon his second sonne Arthur Coke

Some tyme after it fell out unluckily that S'r Walter Ashton now Lord Ashton married my wayting woman a gentlewoman of

## *Lady Hatton's complaint*

a good house and well allyed and although they were lawfully married and sufficient, witnesses yet it pleased him to break it, and his rage was such as he came violently into my Chamber, rent my ruffe from my necke offeringe unworthy blowes before he asked me question of the marriage ; wch I vow before God and whosoever shall read this paper I am no more guiltye of then the Child new borne

at about the same tyme he brake open my Closett and Cabinette and took away the fores'd note of 4000 $\text{£}$ , wch made so great a break betweenc us ; as I remayned at my fathers the Earle of Exeter for a whole yeare after, I must confesse wth a resolucon ever there to continew, had not the great Queene Eliza: Comanded my deare father and unckle to reconcytle us, and promysed to see that her Attourney should use me well and p'forme all promyses her Mat'ie dyed in short tyme after

Many inhumane thinges past not worthy to trouble persons of quality wthall, because they conduce not to this busines, besydes falsifieinge of Convayances and diveres wronges wch I put upp rather then the world should know it, nyther had I now looked so farr back to relate any of theise thinges but to declare how I was outed of my statute, and the  $\text{£}4000$  for all wch I crave p'don both of the readers and hearers and my selfe resolved to put it out of my thoughts, had I binne left wth any respect at his death, and so I leave the relation of manie and greater wronges to my complaynt at Counsell table and his breach of covenants since wch I confesse weare not so well drawne by Ashley as they should have binne

First he stripped me of all my apparell not leavinge as much as linnen for my person allowing me never since any thinge to live on Nyther of my first husbands, nor of his owne estate a peny, wch drove me into great debts and by delays wch I receaved from him grew to that height that they weare never trebled, that I was forced to sell besydes iewells and household stuffe as much land as are worth now betweene 3 and 4 thousand pounds per ann'm and was constrayned to buy his Consent at last for the sale of them notwithstandinge the order at Counsell table wth a goodly Manour in Northfork [Norfolk] wch I purchased of the Kinge called Fakenham, and a thousand pounds in good gold the wch after he had waighed and found to hold naught he accepted of

## *Appendix II*

I forbear to relate the extreamyties wch in this tyme I suffered but onely wish his soule in Heaven and my selfe quietnes.

3 Sept 1634.

*MEMORANDUM* For the Ladye Elizabeth Hatton

That S'r Edw: Coke enioyed a lease wch containd all my lord Chancelour Hattons Estate for the space of 22 yeares valued at £7000 per ann'm and afterwards alienated the sayd Lease as a sacrifice to redeeme the offences he comitted agaynst the King when he was Attourney. This Lease came to him by the Intermariage of the Ladye Elizabeth Hatton.

After that to give the Lady satisfaction he sayd he had enough in his right hand and his left to make her satisfacon, and vowed to doe it but never came to performance of any thinge.

Note.—From the Domestic State Papers, 1634, in the Public Record Office.

### APPENDIX III

*To the Right Honourable Lords assembled in Parlaiment*

*The humble Peticon of ffrances Lady Viscountess Purbecke*

*Die Lunae vizt. 8 die ffebru 1640.*

#### SHEWETH

That about 23 years since during her minority in obedience to the Commands and advice of Sir Edward Cook Kt her late father, she was marryed unto the Lord viscount Purbecke who had thereby a great advancement in reall and personall Estate and £10,000 besides was paid by her said ffather to the late Duke of Buckingham the said Lord Purbecks brother as a further part of her Porcon upon the said Dukes agreement to dispose the same in purchase of Lands to be setled upon her and her issue.

That not long after the said mariage the late Countesse of Buckingham mother to yo'r Pet'rs husband and others upon some pretence of weaknesse and distemper of her Lord and husband caused them to live apart during which time they received & disposed of his Estate (the most of which came from yo'r Pet'rs said father) and left yo'r Pet'r destitute of meanes of livelyhood, and when she repaired to them for her relief in her necessityes she was most barbarously carryed by force into the open street and there left void of all relief.

That her husband being kept from her and shee destitute of support by that great Estate she brought to him in mariage, the late King James of blessed memory was pleased to give direcons for her relief and in pursuance thereof the late Duke of Bucks (who had the power over most of her said husbands Estate) did agree to allow her 1000 Marks per annum for her maintenance and that she should have all her Jewells Apparrell & Household stuff at her owne dispose, but when the same came to be setled there were such Clauses inserted in the said Deed as made her incapable to enjoy her said Jewells Apparrel or household stuff in



### *Appendix III*

Case she should Cohabit again with her Lord and husband and the Annuity to cease during such Cohabitation which Restricon (tho very unreasonable) yet in respect of her then necessityes she was inforced to yield unto, and altho Sometimes she and her said husband had the happinesse afterwards to meet together yet was the same concealed as much as might bee to avoid the danger and Prejudice which she should have susteyned by the discovery thereof : and altho her husband was by them thought so weake in understanding and distempered as unfitt to Cohabit with your Pet'r his wife yet have such as have had the Custody of him and disposicon. of his Estate gained from him the assurance of all his owne Lands of inheritance and converted and disposed great part of his other Estate to their owne use & possessed themselves of all the Evidences of your Pet'r's fathers lands settled upon the mariage which ought to remaine to yo'r Petitioner and her issue.

That not contenting themselves thus to have injured yo'r Pet'r but endeavouring to ruine her in her honour and fortunes the said Countesse of Bucks with many others in her Company when yo'r Pet'r was with child and neer her delivery and in the night time when she was in bed in a riotous and unlawfull manner enter her Chamber and there barbarously haled her out of bed, and Sir Edward Villers Knt being one of the company most unhumanely held her by force upon pretence that midwives and others should search her whether she were with child or not to the danger of her self and the like of her Child which enforced her to withdraw her self to a private place unknown to her adversaries untill her delivery and to take upon her a feigned name both for her self and the sonne borne of her body and to pretend her self to have been the wife of John Wright and the sonn borne of her body to bee Entred in the Register of the parish where hee was Christened by the name of Robert Wright thereby to conceale both her self and Child from their rage and fury which she had just Cause upon her former barbarous usage to fear and suspect.

That no sooner was it discovered that yo'r Pet'r was delivered but she and her servants without any Cause and contrary to the Law were Comitted and deteyned Close prisonners, and if at any

## *Lady Purbeck's petition*

time yo'r Pet'r obtained enlargement she was again illegally committed and if enlarged yet upon baile and enforced to attendance from time to time without any Cause at all to her great damage & dishonour.

And leaving nothing unattempted that might wound her honour or ruine her and her posterity she was Cited into the high Comission Court for a supposed crime of Adultery and there by an unwarrantable and most illegal sentence condemned and fined £500 and unlawfully Committed to prisson for inducing which sentence the Prosecutors endeavoured by negative Prooves to make appear that yo'r Pet'r and her husband did never meet together for above a yeare before her delivery (thereby contrary to Law to blemish and asperse her issue and contrary to the truth as appeared by many affirmative proofes), and altho yo'r Pet'r desired therein to be tryed by her owne husband who best knew the Truth thereof yet would not that be granted her and when she afterward obtained a rule in the Court of Comon pleas for a Prohibition to the high Com'ion Court in respect of the illegality of the said sentence (and none did openly or could rationally and lawfully oppose it) yet could she not ever obtaine the said Prohibicon under seale and that benefit which the Law affordeth or at least ought to yield to every Subject.

That she being Prissoner in the Gatehouse by the Comands of the Arch B'p of Canterbury grounded upon the said high Com' sentence as was pretended (tho countenanced by Pretext of some other illegall warrant) and finding the Arch B'ps Prosecucon violent (being one and a Chief Judge in pronouncing the said Sentence) did to prevent that danger (which through his great power she then feared) make an Escape, for which in the first place shee craves your Lords'ps honorable & favorable interpretation and your Noble intercession to her gracious Sovereigne for his Royall pardon and that yo'r Lord'ps would be honorably pleased as in Care of her and her posterity to take order for the safe Custody of the Evidences of her owne Lands and disposing the said £10,000 according to the said Agreement which hitherto is not done : So to take all the aforesaid illegall Proceedings and her extream sufferings and damages into yo'r hon'ble Consideracon and that Right may be done her according to Justice and

### *Appendix III*

Equity and that William Alcocke Adminstrator of the goods and Chattells of the late Duke of Bucks The Countesse of Denbigh and such others as pretend title to the Lord Purbecks Lands, The Lord Arch B'p of Canterbury his Grace : Sir Henry Martin Knt and such others as have been the Agents and Instruments in the aforesaid illegall Proceedings may be called to answer the p'mises before yo'r Lord'ps and that yo'r Pet'r may have relief and they receive punishment according to their Demeritts  
and as in Duty bound etc

*PURBECKE.*

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## INDEX

- Abergavenny, Lord, 265  
 Anglesea, Viscount, v. Villiers, Christopher  
 Anne of Austria, Queen of France, 165, 181, 236, 228, 234  
 Anne of Denmark, Queen of England, 17-20, 33, 40, 66, 70, 73-9, 84-6, 90, 94; her death, 77, 86  
 Anstis, —. —., Garter King at Arms, 237  
 Ashton, Sir Walter, 24, 276  
 Auden, Miss, xi  
  
 Bacon, Sir Francis, later Lord Verulam and Viscount St. Albans, 8, 9, 17, 25, 27-8, 44, 46, 48-9, 50, 52-3, 58, 61, 66, 71, 82; impeached, 95; his death, 96  
 Banbury, Earl of, 89, 93, 130, 90  
 Banks, Sir John, Attorney-General, 219, 227; Lord Chief Justice, 244, 249  
     Lady, 249-50, 251  
 Barham, Richard, XIV, 1, 2, 87, 267  
 Barkham, Mr. Alderman, 163, 169  
 Bathwell, Henry, 14  
 Bath and Wells, Bishop of, v. Laud, William  
 Beaumont, Anthony, 38  
 Becher, Sir William, 182  
 Bedford, Rev. D., xi  
 Bedford, William, Earl of, 94  
 Benet, Mr. Alderman, 61, 64, 67-8  
 Berkeley, Frances, daughter of Sir Maurice, grand-daughter of Lady Hatton, 36, 216-8, 234 (her mother was Elizabeth Coke)  
 Berkeley, Henry, in charge of Viscount Purbeck, 209-10  
 Berkeley, Sir Maurice, marries Elizabeth Coke, 35-6, 209, 216; Petitions the Council, 217-8, 234  
 Berkshire, Countess of, Lady Elizabeth Howard, née Cecil, 30, 48, 88, 122  
     Earl of, 30, 48, 88, 122  
 Berrowe, Colonel John, 248  
 Bleeding Heart Yard, xivi, 87; Lady of, 3, 264  
 Bohemia, King of, 97-9, 109, 130  
     Queen of, 69, 74, 97-9, 108, 129-31, 198, 246  
 Bristol, Earl of, 208  
 Buckingham, Marquess of, George Villiers, 37-8, 39, 51-4, 58, 65, 69, 70, 73-6, 79, 80, 84-6, 90, 98, 106-7, 113-4, 119, 122-3, 125-7, 129, 131-5, 137, 142, 144-50, 152-3, 155-9, 160-1, 163, 165, 168-9, 174-5, 181-92, 198, 200, 201-6, 210-2, 218, 220, 228, 234; letter from Lady Purbeck, 125-6; mission in Spain, 124; created a Duke, 130; his unpopularity, 202-5; his death, 205-6  
 Buckingham, Countess of, formerly Lady Compton, 38, 46-8, 50, 54-5, 57, 59-60, 73, 79, 80, 105-6, 112-4, 118-20, 123, 128, 134-5, 139-41, 142-5, 150, 161-2, 170, 173-5, 190, 202-3, 209, 211-2, 220, 279-80; her death, 210

## Index

- Buckingham, Duchess of, Catherine Manners, 107, 131-3  
 Bumpus, Messrs. John and Edward, xi  
*Burke's Extinct Peerages of Great Britain and Ireland*, 128  
 Burghley, Lord, 3, 10, 12, 14, 30, 59, 259  
 Burghley, Lady, 30, 59  
 Campbell, Lord, 64, 101-2  
 Carleton, Sir Dudley, 55, 66, 74-5, 87, 99, 130-1, 142, 153, 155, 163, 208-9, 213; created Earl of Dorchester, 75, 208  
 Carleton, Lady, 74  
 Carr, Lady Anne, daughter of the Earl of Somerset, 93-4  
 Cecil, Lady Diana, niece of Lady Hatton, marries the Earl of Oxford, 76, 88, 257, 198  
 Cecil, Lady Elizabeth, marries Earl of Berkshire, 88  
 Cecil, Robert, 1st Earl of Salisbury, 10, 21, 24, 48, 88, 165, 276  
 Cecil, General, 131  
 Chamberlain, John, 32, 55, 142, 155, 163, 153, 154  
 Charles, Prince Elect and Count Palatine of the Rhine, 246, 260  
 Charles, Prince of Wales, v. Charles I  
 Charles I, King of England, xiii, 66, 70, 84-6, 97, 100-1, 105, 112, 117, 128, 139, 156-7, 168, 198-201, 205-6, 209, 213-15, 218, 220-1, 227, 229, 231-3, 234, 236, 238-9, 247, 251-6, 259, 269; sent to Spain, 129; return to England, 134; marries Henriette Marie, 165; his coronation, 181; civil war, 246  
 Charles II, King of England, 243, 264, 270, 273  
 Clare, John, Earl of, 168, 149  
 Coke, Arthur, 2nd son of Sir Edward Coke, 24, 216, 276  
 Coke, Elizabeth, daughter of Lady Hatton, 15, 20; marries Sir Maurice Berkeley, 35-6, 209, 216-8  
 Sir John, 168, 232, 235  
 Sir Robert, 58, 65  
*Commentary on Littleton*, by Sir Edward Coke, 103, 213  
 Coke, Frances, daughter of Lady Hatton, afterwards the Viscountess Purbeck, xiii, xiv, 15, 20, 33, 34, 36, 37, 39-43, 44-50, 51-8, 59-60, 61-2, 69-72, 73, 76, 81, 84, 86-8, 94, 104, 105-7, 110-1, 113-6, 117-22, 123-9, 130-1, 134-8, 139, 153-4, 157-61, 164-5, 169-74, 181, 189-91, 196-7, 208, 217-8, 226-35, 237, 238-40, 244, 248, 265; designs for her marriage, 36-50; letter to Earl of Oxford, 43; letter to her mother, 63-4; marries Sir John Villiers, 65-8; becomes Viscountess Purbeck, 80; troubles with her husband's family, 105-7, 113-4, 118-26; deed of separation, 127-8; birth of a son, 140-5; trial at Lambeth, 146-52; ill of the smallpox, 155-6; warrant for her arrest, 163; trial at London House, 183-7; sentence, 188; journey to Shropshire, 192-5; lives with her father, 211-5; arrested, 219-24; flight to France, 225; return to England, 236; in Oxford, 248; illness at Oxford, 255; her death, 256-8; petition to Parliament, 270-82  
 Coke, Sir Edward, formerly spelt Cooke, xiii, xiv, 2, 8, 9-11, 17-20, 23-4, 26-8, 32-4, 51-3, 55-57, 59-60, 65-7, 71, 72, 75-6,

# Index

- 79, 81-3, 93, 96-102, 109, 114-6, 143, 198-9, 212-4, 217-9, 220, 275-8, 279; marries Lady Elizabeth Hatton, 12-5; entertains Queen Elizabeth, 16; made a Judge, 21, 25; Sir Christopher's Hatton's Bond, 22; superseded as Chief Justice of King's Bench, 29; marital quarrels, 30-1; plans for marriage of Elizabeth, 35-6; plans for marriage of Frances, 36-43; search warrant for Frances, 44-8; summoned before the Star Chamber, 48-50; imprisons his wife, 61; subdues Frances, 62-4; returned as member for Liskeard, 95; address to the King, 100-1; imprisoned in the Tower, 103-4; member for Coventry, 144; Petition of Right, 200-1; accident to, 211; his death, 215
- Compton, Lady, afterwards Countess of Buckingham, 38, 46-8, 50, 54-5, 57, 59, 60, 73, 79
- Compton, Sir Thomas, 38
- Conway, Sir Edward, Secretary of State, 132-3, 167-8, 181, 230
- Cooke, Sir Edward, v. Sir Edward Coke
- Corfe Castle, 4-5, 20, 31, 64-5, 79, 80, 121, 210, 219, 244-5; siege of, 249-251
- Correspondence of the Hatton family*, 267
- Cottington, Lord, 227
- Coventry, Sir Thomas, Attorney-General, 146, 147, 158, 160; Lord Keeper, 184
- Craven, Earl of, 69
- Craven, Sir William, 69-70
- Danvers, Lord, 30
- Sir John, 244, 254; exor. of Lady Hatton's will, 258, 262
- Elizabeth, 254
- Dee, Dr., 26
- De Moleyns, Sir William, 245
- Dencare, Mr., 170
- Denbigh, Susan, Countess of, 38, 131, 134, 175, 206, 238, 210, 282
- Denny, Lady, sister of Lady Hatton, 30
- Lord, 30
- Dhona, Baron, 98
- Dickenson, Daniel, footman to Lady Purbeck, 136, 169-72
- Digby, Sir Kenelm, 208, 229-31, 234-236, 248
- Lord, 244
- Veneria, Lady, 208, 229
- Dorchester, Earl of, v. Carleton, Sir Dudley,
- Dorset, Edward, Earl of, 185
- Dudley, Lord North, exor. of Lady Hatton's will, 258, 266
- Dugdale, Sir William, 117
- Durham, Richard, Lord Bishop of, 185
- Edmondes, Sir Thomas, 168
- Elizabeth, Queen of England, 3-6, 10, 13, 16-8, 20-2, 25-6, 277; visits Sir Edward Coke, 16
- Elizabeth, Princess, later Countess Palatine, 97-9, v. Queen of Bohemia
- Elwick, Mr., Solicitor, 170-4
- Ely, Cox, Bishop of, 6
- Mathew Wren, Bishop of, causes arrest of Lady Hatton, 241-2; imprisoned in Tower, 243, 270
- Patrick, Bishop of, 270
- Ely, John Francis White, Bishop of, 241
- Ellesmere, Chancellor, 227
- Erle, Sir Walter, 244, 250
- Essex, Earl of, 9, 21, 91, 130, 244, 253, Marries Lady Frances Howard, 90
- Exeter, John, Earl of, 261, 266



## Index

- Exeter, Thomas Cecil, Earl of, 3,  
24, 259, 276-7  
Exeter, William, Earl of, 275
- Fairfax, General, 256  
Favourite The, v. Buckingham,  
Marquess of
- Fanshawe, Alice, married Sir Chris-  
topher Hatton, 2, 4, 155, 251,  
266-8 ; her death, 269  
Sir Thomas, 251
- Felton, John, assassinates the Duke  
of Buckingham, 205
- Fisher, a Jesuit Father, 112-3, 119
- Flower, C. T., xi
- Forman, Dr., a charlatan, 26, 87,  
91-3, 136
- Frederick V, Count Palatine, 97
- Freeman, Sir Ralph, 203
- Freeman, Mr. Alderman, 163, 165
- Garrard, Rev. George, 221, 222,  
227-8, 236
- Gibbon, R. H., xi
- Godbold, John, draws Lady Hat-  
ton's will, 258, 262-3
- Gondomar, Spanish Ambassador,  
99, 100, 107-10, 164
- Gosse, C. W. F., xiv
- Grandison, Oliver Viscount, 185
- Green, E. W., xi
- Groby, Lord Grey of, 251
- Hamilton, Marquess of, 71
- Hampden, John, 244
- Hampton Court Palace, 17, 18-9,  
38, 64-8, 107, 117, 133-4
- Hatton, Lady Cecilia, 2, 269
- Hatton House in Holborn, 1, 2, 4-7,  
11-12, 31, 50, 54, 56-7, 70-1, 76,  
81, 87, 94, 107, 109, 117, 121, 142,  
149, 164, 167, 181, 219, 241-3,  
245, 246, 251, 253, 257, 258, 260,  
262-4, 266, 269, 270, 273-4
- Hatton, Christopher, Lord Chan-  
cellor, Sir Christopher, 2-4, 5-7,  
27, 81, 103, 259, 266, 278 ; debt  
to Queen Elizabeth, 22, 27
- Hatton, Christopher, Sir, godson of  
Lord Chancellor, husband of  
Alice Fanshawe, 2, 4, 22, 27, 81,  
82, 266-9
- Hatton, Christopher, Lord, son of  
Alice Fanshawe, 251, 261, 266-7,  
268-9 ; created Lord Hatton,  
251
- Hatton, Christopher, Viscount  
grandson of Alice Fanshawe, 269,  
270, 273-4
- Hatton, Lady Elizabeth, nee Lady  
Elizabeth Cecil, xiii, xiv, xv, 1-5,  
7, 8-15, 16-7, 20, 22-4, 26-7,  
34-6, 38, 57-9, 72, 74-6, 79-83,  
88, 104-5, 108-11, 114, 121-5,  
134-5, 143-4, 149, 161, 163,  
164-5, 167, 168-9, 183, 189,  
196-9, 210, 214, 230, 245-6,  
249-50, 251-4, 255, 257, 264,  
266, 269 ; married to Sir William  
Newport Hatton, 3 ; took the  
name of Hatton, 3 ; marries  
the Attorney-General, Edward  
Cooke, 12 ; Elizabeth and Frances  
born, 15 ; friendship with the  
Queen of James I, 17, 33, 73 ;  
marital differences, 22-5, 81 ;  
before the Council, 30-2 ; mar-  
riage of Elizabeth, 35-6 ; opposes  
marriage of Frances to Sir John  
Villiers, 39-55 ; imprisoned, 60-9 ;  
released and entertains the King  
and Queen, 70-1 ; letter to Sir  
D. Carleton, 75 ; the Queen's  
funeral, 77-8 ; parties at Hatton  
House, 86-7, 94 ; quarrel with  
the Villiers family, 106 ; upholds  
Frances, 107, 142 ; lets Hatton  
House to Duke of Lenox and  
Richmond, 109-10 ; appeals to  
the King, 126-7, 208-9 ; visits

## Index

- the Queen of Bohemia, 130-1, 198; birth of a grandson, 140-1; legitimacy disputed by Duke of Buckingham; supports Frances before the Spiritual Court, 150-2; declines to lend Hatton House to the King, 181; her husband's death, 215-8; sale of Corfe Castle, 219; opposes the Bishop of Ely, 241; committed to the Fleet, 242; released, 243; supports the Roundheads, 244; purchases Ware Park, 251; death of Frances, 256; makes her will, 258-62; her death, 263
- Hatton, Frances, stepdaughter of Lady Hatton, 4, 23, 87, 276; marries Sir Robert Rich, afterwards Earl of Warwick, 24, 27
- Hatton, Sir William, formerly Newport, husband of Lady Hatton, 3, 4, 8, 11, 14, 23, 218, 258-9, 276
- Heath, Robert, Solicitor-General, 146-7, 159-60, 209
- Henriette Marie, Queen of England, 165, 174-8, 181, 198, 247, 253
- Herbert, Sir Gerard, 66-7
- Hill, R. H., xi
- Hippisley, Sir John, 131-4, 182
- History of Epidemics*, Dr. Creighton, 179
- Hobart, Sir John, 35
- Holland, Lord, 209, 244
- Holles, Denzil, 240, 244; exor. of Lady Hatton's will, 258, 262, 266
- Holmes, M. R., xiv
- Houghton, Lord, 47, 49, 59, 74
- Howard, Sir Charles, K.C.B., 88
- Howard, Lady Elizabeth, later Countess of Banbury, 90, 94, 88-9, 130
- Howard, Sir Edward, K.C.B., 88
- Howard, Lady Frances, 88; married to the Earl of Essex, 90-2; later Countess of Somerset, 130; marriage annulled 92; marries the Earl of Somerset, 93-4
- Howard, Henry, 88
- Howard, Lady Katherine, later Countess of Salisbury, 88,
- Howard, Sir Robert, K.C.B., xiv, 88, 94, 114, 117-9, 124, 127-30, 135-7, 145-8, 150-3, 155, 157-8, 163, 182-7, 192-6, 212, 220-8, 234, 236, 238, 240, 244, 247-8; tried by Spiritual Court, 150; in the Fleet Prison, 165-6; pardoned, 182-3; takes Lady Purbeck to Shropshire, 192-5; arrested, 221; marries Lady Catherine Neville, 265; death, 266
- Howard, Sir Thomas, v. Berkshire, Earl of, Sir William, K.C.B., 88
- Huntingdon, Lord, 31
- Ingoldsby Legends*, xiv, 1
- James I, King of England, xiii, 16-21, 25-9, 33, 40, 44, 50-5, 57-9, 64-74, 75-81, 84-5, 91-3, 95-104, 106-10, 112-15, 117, 122, 126-34, 137, 142, 147, 150, 152-3, 156-7, 161-2; disgraces Sir Edward Coke, 36-7, in Parliament of 1621, 95-104; his death, 165; funeral, 168; 269
- Jones, H., of the Clun Museum, xi
- Johnstone, E., n. 152-3
- Jorkin, Rev. F. W., xi
- Knollys, Lord, 48, 89, v. Earl of Banbury
- Lambe, Dr., astrologer, 97, 136-8, 142, 146, 158-60, 163, 203-5, 254
- Sir John, 240

## Index

- Lanier, Innocent, musician, 60,  
     156-60  
 Laud, William, Archbishop of  
     Canterbury, 112-3, 119, 185,  
     220-2, 224, 226, 281-2; com-  
     mitted to the Tower, 240; be-  
     headed, 241  
 Lavender, F., xi  
 Lechbill, Sir E., 47  
 Lenox and Richmond, Duchess of,  
     110, 149-50, 164-5, 167-8,  
     Duke of, leases Hatton House,  
     109, 121, 149  
 Ley, Sir James, Lord Chief Justice,  
     96  
 Liddell, Mr., of the Bodleian Lib-  
     rary, xi, xiii  
*Life and Times of Francis Bacon*, 71n  
 Lilly, William, Astrologer, 254-5  
 Lincoln, Williams, Bishop of, 135,  
     168; letters to the Duke of  
     Buckingham, 147-9  
*Lives of the Chief Justices*, by Lord  
     Campbell, 64  
*Lives of the Necromancers*, 91n  
*Lives of the Princesses of England*,  
     100n, 130n  
 London, George, Lord Bishop of,  
     185  
 Longley, Mr., of the British  
     Museum, xi  
 Louis XIII, 228, 229, 236, 234, 333  
  
 Manchester, Henry, Earl of, 184  
 Manners, Lady Catherine, marries  
     the Marquis of Buckingham, 107  
 Martin, Sir Henry, 185, 240, 282  
 Maurice, Prince, 246, 249-50  
 Mayerne, Dr., Theodore, 156  
 Meade, Mr., 212  
 Memoirs of Anne, Lady Fanshawe,  
     255n  
 Middlesex, Earl of, 134, 144  
 Montague, Sir Charles, 269  
 Montague, Elizabeth, 2 marries  
     Lord Hatton, 269  
     Montgomery, Philip, Earl of, 185  
     Murray, John, xv  
  
 Nethersole, Sir Francis, 198  
 Neville, Lady Katherine, marries  
     Sir Robert Howard, 265  
 Newport, Sir William, v. Hatton,  
     Sir William  
 North, Lord Dudley, exor. of Lady  
     Hatton's will, 258, 266  
 Northampton, Earl of, 38  
 Northumberland, Earl of, 227,  
     244, 266  
 Norwich, Samuel, Lord Bishop of,  
     185  
 Noy, William, 227  
  
 Osborne, Sir James, 170  
 Overbury, Sir Thomas, trial of, 26,  
     92-3, 136  
 Oxford, Diana, Countess of, v. Lady  
     Diana Cecil  
 Oxford, Henry de Vere, Earl of,  
     41-3, 48-50, 54, 57, 63, 76, 122;  
     his death, 198  
  
 Paston, Mrs., Bridget, 10, 13, 24, 34,  
     44, 62, 215, 216  
 Pembroke, William, Earl of, 185  
 Penn, Mr. 16. 46. 246  
 Penn, Mrs., 68  
 Percy, Lady Diana, 266  
 Pitman, Lieut.-Colonel, 250  
 Popham, Chief Justice, 21  
 Purbeck, Frances, Viscountess, v.  
     Coke, Frances  
 Purbeck, Viscount, v. Villiers, Sir  
     John  
 Purbeck Peerage Claim, xiii, 237  
 Pym, John, 244  
  
 Raleigh, Sir Walter, 21  
 Rayner, Sir William, 38  
 Rich, Sir Robert, later Earl of

# Index

- Warwick, 24, 27, 47-8, 74, 81, 87, 244
- Rich, Lady Robert, 74, v. Frances Hatton
- Richardson, Lord Chief Justice, 209
- Richelieu, Cardinal, 181, 183, 228-9, 231, 233-6, 248
- Richmond, Duchess of, v. Lennox, Duchess of,
- Rives, Dr., King's Advocate, 223-4, 226
- Rochester, Dean of, 185
- Rochester, John, Lord Bishop of, 185
- Rupert, Prince, 246, 253
- Rutland, Earl of, 107
- St. Paul's, Dean of, 185
- Salisbury, Earl of, Robert Cecil, 10, 21, 24, 48, 88, 165, 276
- Savage, Sir Thomas, 168
- Savoy, Ambassador of, 190-2
- Saye and Sele, Lord, 244
- Scudamore, Lord, Ambassador in Paris, 229; letter to Sir John Coke, 231-3, 235-6
- Shakespeare, William, 17
- Slingsby, Elizabeth, marries Viscount Purbeck, 265
- Slingsby, Sir William, 265
- Somerset, Countess of, v. Howard, Lady Frances
- Somerset, Robert Carr, Earl of, 90-4
- Southall, L. G., xi
- Southampton, Earl of, 21
- Stanley, Sir Edward, 208
- Stoke Poges, Manor of, 16, 31, 39, 41, 45-6, 83, 104, 143-4, 179, 211-2, 214-6, 218-9, 221, 234, 244-6, 251, 261-2
- Stuteville, Sir Martin, 213
- Suffolk, Earl of, 28, 46, 87, 88, 94, 114, 117, 147, 152
- Turner, Mrs., 90, 92-3
- Vane, Sir Harry, 227, 244
- Vaux, Edward Lord, of Harweden, 89, 90
- Vaux, Nicholas, alias Earl of Banbury, 89, 90
- Vere, Lord, 227
- Verulam, Lord, v. Bacon, Sir Francis,
- Villiers, Christopher, later Viscount Anglesea, 122, 210, 237
- Villiers, Sir Edward, 98, 140, 280
- Villiers, Sir George, 38, 202
- Villiers, Sir John, later Viscount Purbeck, 37-41, 48-50, 51-7, 61-4, 66-9, 79-81, 83-7, 106-7, 111, 116, 117-8, 120-1, 123, 125-6, 127, 135, 139-41, 144, 145, 146, 157, 159, 183-4, 187-8, 209-10, 236, 237-8, 260, 261, 279-82; marries Frances Coke, 65; created Viscount Purbeck, 80; becomes deranged, 105; becomes Papist, 112; separated from his wife, 113; confined in Wallingford House, 119; again deranged, 131-3; at Hampton Court, 133-4; recovers his reason and runs to his wife, 153-4; nurses her of smallpox, 155-6; letters from King Charles I on behalf of, 239; marries Elizabeth Slingsby, 265; death, 265-6
- Villiers, Robert, christened Wright, son of Viscountess Purbeck, 140-1, 146, 154, 160, 163, 169-71, 174, 183-7, 189, 191-3, 237, 244, 260-2, 265-6, 280
- Vision of the Twelve Goddesses*, a masque, 17
- Wallingford, Viscount, v. Banbury, Earl of,
- Wallingford, Viscountess, v. Lady Elizabeth Howard

## *Index*

- Ware, Sir Henry, 260  
Warwick, Earl of, v. Sir Robert Rich  
Weekes, Aquila, Keeper of the Gatehouse, 224, 226  
Weldon, Sir Anthony, 27, 84-5  
Wentworth, Lord, later Earl of Strafford, 221, 227-8, 236  
Wharton, Lady, 130  
Whitelock, Bulstrode, 244, 255  
Whitelocke, Sir James, 180  
Whitgift, Archbishop of Canterbury, 10-11, 14-5, 78  
Wilson, Mr., of John and Edward Bumpus, xi  
Wimbledon, Earl of, brother to Lady Hatton, 214, 227, 230-1  
Windebank, Sir Frances, Secretary of State, 177, 214 ; letters on behalf of Viscountess Purbeck, 238-9  
Wingfield, Mrs., 170, 172-3  
Winwood, Sir Ralph, 20, 44, 49, 50, 52, 53, 74  
Withipole, Sir Edmund, cousin of Lady Hatton, 41, 51  
Worley, Thomas, footman to Viscountess Purbeck, 136, 169, 170-4  
Wray, Sir Christopher, exor. of Lady Hatton's will, 258, 262, 266  
Wren, Sir Christopher, 241, 245  
Wright, Robert, v. Villiers, Robert,





